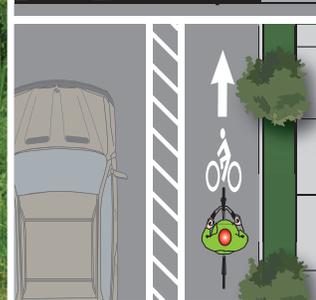
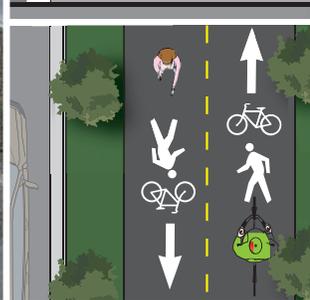
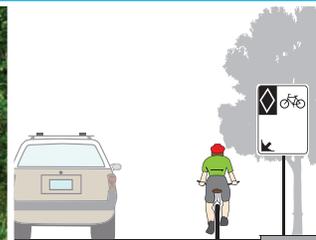


# Lake to Lake

## CYCLING ROUTE and WALKING TRAIL

VOLUME 1

MASTER REPORT JUNE 2013





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## 1.0 STUDY BACKGROUND

Volume 1 of the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail Report provides an overview of existing trails and active transportation facilities found within the Region as well as its local area municipalities. Key existing policies and plans are identified which speak to trail and cycling development throughout the Region, and within each municipality. York Region, the local municipalities and three Smart Commute TMAs in the Region also support or deliver pedestrian and cycling educational strategies and promotional programming.

Volume 1 summarizes background information, public and stakeholder input and documents the process that has led to identification and confirmation of the preferred alignment and design concept for the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail.

The work completed in Volume 1 has led to selection of the preferred route alignment and provides the basis for the detailed design feasibility which is separately documented in Volume 2.

### 1.1 York Region & Its Existing Cycling and Trail Facilities

York Region covers 1,762 square kilometres from Lake Simcoe in the north to the City of Toronto in the south. Its eastern border is shared with Durham Region, to the west is Peel Region, and Simcoe County is to the northwest. Towns and cities in York Region include:

- Town of Aurora;
- Town of East Gwillimbury;
- Town of Georgina;
- Township of King;
- City of Markham;
- Town of Newmarket;
- Town of Richmond Hill;
- City of Vaughan; and
- Town of Whitchurch–Stouffville.

In addition to the built-up areas of its municipalities, York Region's landscape includes farmlands, wetlands and kettle lakes, the Oak Ridges Moraine and over 2,070 hectares of regional forest. According to Statistics Canada, the population of York Region in 2011 had grown to 1,032,524.



### 1.1.1 Active Transportation (AT) & Trail Facilities in York Region

Walking, hiking, and cycling are among some of the most popular and fastest growing outdoor activities in York Region. People are assigning more importance to where they work and live as it relates to quality of life and are more often associating their measure of well-being, fitness, and health with recreation and active transportation. As a result, people are seeking additional opportunities to spend more time outdoors, are making healthier lifestyle choices, and are participating in more outdoor and active recreation activities in their daily lives.

York Region is rich in natural heritage areas that can facilitate opportunities for walking, hiking, cycling, and other outdoor activities that are a part of a healthy and active lifestyle. These natural areas include the shores of Lake Simcoe, the major valleys of the Humber, Don, Rouge, Black, Holland and Maskinonge Rivers, the extensive woodlands, wetlands, and the Oak Ridges Moraine.

York Region currently contains 786 kilometres of trails. These trails are popular destinations and demand is increasing at the regional and local municipal level to improve and expand trails and, more importantly, to connect them. The Oak Ridges Trail and Nokiidaa Trail are prime examples of existing destination trails that traverse local municipal boundaries and serve as an important region-wide amenity to regional residents and visitors.

In 2008, the Region adopted an award winning Regional Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan<sup>1</sup> that is now in the process of being implemented. The plan is designed to improve both the pedestrian and cycling environment that supports and promotes alternative modes of active transportation and support more liveable, walkable communities. The Master Plan's focus is on the creation of an integrated cycling and pedestrian network throughout the Region for commuting purposes, connecting municipalities, and linking transit terminals and bus stops. A key feature of the plan is the recommendation to develop, in partnership with local municipalities and conservation authorities, a Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario on and off-road cycling route and walking trail. The link would provide a continuous cycling and walking connection between the two Lakes and serve as a major recreational amenity for both residents and visitors to York Region.

#### *Map of Existing Cycling Facilities*

In 2011, York Region developed its first Cycling Map, which identifies Regional and local bicycle lanes, boulevard paths, signed bicycle routes, multi-use trails



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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.york.ca/departments/planning+and+development/pedestrian+and+cycling+master+plan.htm>

and paved shoulders. The map was developed as a joint effort between York Region, the nine local municipalities, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. It was funded using a grant from the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport.

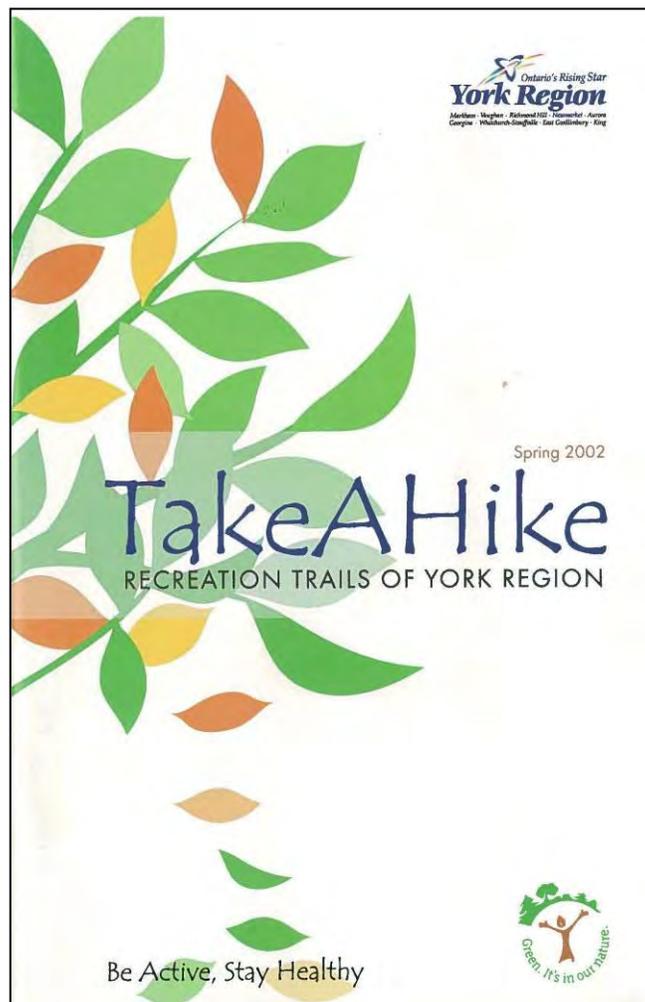
The map is intended to be a resource for residents and visitors of York Region to help plan routes to work, school, shopping or to generally explore Regional destinations. In addition to illustrating regional and local municipal cycling routes, the map also provides users with key cycling information including:

- A description of common cycling signs and pavement markings which can be found throughout the Region;
- Upcoming cycling events as well as resources;
- A description of bicycle parts and hand signals;
- Details on bicycle repair and speciality shops; and
- A “How To” guide for cycling on and off-road.

Maps are available to the public online at <http://www.YorkCycling.ca> or at Regional and local municipal offices.

### *Take a Hike Trail Guide*

Originally released in 2002, the Take A Hike Trail Guide was created through the York Region Greening Strategy by a Trail Guide Planning Committee and is available online at the Region’s website. The purpose of the guide is to encourage residents and visitors to discover the unique natural and cultural heritage of each community. It is also intended to be used to help promote a healthy and active lifestyle by exploring the beautiful valley and stream corridors, kettle lakes, wetlands, woodlands, and wildlife habitats the Region has to offer through the extensive trail system outlined in the guide. The trail guide identifies the 32 recreational trails, including 18 Regional Forest tract routes. The comprehensive guide is a key component of the York Region Greening Strategy’s community education and promotion campaign.



## 1.1.2 Local Municipal AT & Trails Facilities

The following is a summary of existing active transportation routes and trail facilities found within each of the Region's local municipalities. In addition, information on future routes as well as potential extensions to the existing network has been documented, where possible.

<b>Town of Aurora</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The trail system links many of the Town's residential subdivisions and natural heritage corridors.</li><li>■ Key trails include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Holland River Valley Trail</b> - a 4.0 km gravel trail to the north and south of Aurora made up of natural meadows and wetland habitats and Willow Farm.</li><li>● <b>Lakeview and Wimpey Trail system</b> - a 3.5 km main trail with additional side routes.</li><li>● <b>Sheppard's Bush Conservation Area</b> - located east of Aurora's downtown core, includes a popular 1.0 km stone dust multi-use trail and a system of natural trails.</li></ul></li><li>■ Town trails are illustrated on the Town's Recreational Trails Map as well as the 2008 Recreation and Leisure Map. The Town of Aurora established a Trails Sub-Committee (formerly the Leisure Services Advisory Committee), which represents the parks and recreation services department (formerly the leisure services department). The Committee ensures quality parks and recreation opportunities through programs, services, recreational facilities and parks throughout the Town and assisted in the development of Aurora's Trails Master Plan in 2011.</li></ul>
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## Town of East Gwillimbury

- The Town has a wide range of trails to accommodate cycling, pedestrian, and other recreational uses and completed an Active Transportation and Trails Master Plan in 2012.
- Key trails include:
  - **The Holland River Trail** - a 3.0 km gravel and woodchip trail located near the community of Holland landing.
  - **The Simcoe Trail** - a 4.0 km gravel and woodchip trail located east of Yonge Street in Holland Landing north and south between Thompson Drive and Anchor park.
  - **The Sutton / Zephyr Trail (East Gwillimbury)** - a 4.0 km compacted earth trail that begins at Holborn Road.
  - **The Nokiidaa Trail segment through Roger's Reservoir Conservation Area** - a 4.5 km trail of limestone and natural pathways, located 2.0 km north of Newmarket.
- Each trail has its own individual map online that can be accessed on the Town's website (<http://www.eastgwillimbury.ca/>).

## Town of Georgina

- The Town has a wide range of trails to accommodate cycling and pedestrian activities with both on and off-road recreational trails.
- Key trails include:
  - **The Sutton / Zephyr Rail Trail (Georgina)** - a 10 km granular trail that begins in Brown Hill and continues 10 km to its northern ending at Catering Road.
  - **The Lake Simcoe Trail** – an extensive 50 km asphalt trail that winds along Lake Drive adjacent to the shores of Lake Simcoe.
  - **An accessible trail found within the Sibbald Point Provincial Park** - trail is 0.5 to 2.0 km in length, depending on one's route, and is comprised of woodchips and natural pathways as well as a boardwalk.



## King Township

- The Township has developed a wide range of accessible trails.
- Key trails include:
  - **The Centennial Park Trail** - a natural trail providing the public with good signage and colour markings.
  - **The King City Trail** - a 2.4 km open field, forest, marsh, and wetland trail located in the valley land area of Keele Street between McClure Drive to the North and Norman Drive.
  - **Other Trails Include:** Oak Ridges Moraine Trails, Fox Trail, Nobleton Trail System, Pottageville Park Trail, and Happy Valley Forest.
  - **Conservation Areas with trails** include: Cold Creek Conservation Area and Thorton Bales Conservation Area.

## City of Markham

- The City supports a number of trails which make up a system accessible to all residents of the City.
- Key trails include:
  - **The Huntington Trail** - a 2.0 km stone-dust trail with some paved sections, which runs west from Leslie Street in Thornhill and crosses little German Mills Creek to Huntington Park.
  - **The Milne Dam Conservation Park** – which contains a 2.0 km stone-dust trail with some paved sections. This park is a part of the Rouge Park and is planned to become part of a future Rouge Park Trails System.
  - **The Unionville Valleylands** - which supports a variety of trails made up of stone-dust, asphalt, and some boardwalks, located in the heart of Unionville.

## Town of Newmarket

- The Town has a wide range of trails, including trails within parks/conservation areas that comprise the Tom Taylor Trail.
- Key trails include:
  - **The Mabel Davis Conservation Area** - a 1.5 km limestone trail located in north-central Newmarket, between “The Tannery” and Bayview Parkway.
  - **George Richardson Park** - a 3.2 km granular, paved trail located in North Newmarket.
  - **Queen Street Property** - a 0.5 km paved trail that follows along the East Holland River between Queen Street to the South and Davis Drive to the North.
  - **Wesley Brooks Memorial Conservation Area / Fairy Lake** - a 1.5 km paved trail circling the lake.

## Town of Richmond Hill

- To accommodate the recreational needs of its residents, the Town of has developed its own system of parks and trails.
- A popular trail includes:
  - **The Mill Pond Park** - a 1.5 km interlocking and asphalt trail with some gravel extensions. The park trail is accessed by transit at the southeast corner of Mill and Trench Street.
  - **Oak Ridges Corridor Park Trail** – a 5.0 km granular, boardwalk and asphalt trail location in Park Ridges Moraine Corridor Park.
  - **Phyllis Rawlinson** – A 3.1 km granular, boardwalk and concrete trail located in Phyllis Rawlinson Park.
  - **Beaver Greenway** – A 4.6 km asphalt and granular trail located between Major Mackenzie Drive to the north and East Beaver Creek Road to the south.
- The Town developed a Trails Master Plan, Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan and a Parks and Trails Guide which are available to the public and includes mapping of all recreational facilities. The Town also has a map that outlines all trails as well as on- and off-road cycling and pedestrian routes. This map can be found online on the Town’s website (<http://www.richmondhill.ca/homepage.asp>) or as a hard copy.



<b>City of Vaughan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Key trails include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Bartley Smith Greenway</b> - a 6.0 km gravel trail that follows the course of the West Don River.</li> <li>• <b>The Humber Trail</b> - a 3.5 km gravel main trail with local dirt trails that weaves its way through the valley of the east Humber River.</li> <li>• <b>The Boyd Conservation Area</b> - a 6.0 km gravel and natural hiking trail that circles the conservation area, located in the City of Vaughan along the Humber River Valley.</li> <li>• <b>The Kortright Centre for Conservation</b> - a 15 km natural and gravel trail designated for all types of participants.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<b>Town of Whitchurch Stouffville</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville has a trails system connecting its residents with local environmental features and park areas.</li> <li>■ Key trails include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Stouffville Town Trail</b> - a 6.0 to 8.0 km paved trail with a natural footpath along the reservoir.</li> <li>• <b>The Vandorf Park Trail</b> - a 2.0 km gravel trail that is currently under construction.</li> <li>• <b>The Whitchurch Conservation Area</b> - a 0.5 km natural trail on land that was donated by the Whitchurch Wildlife Conservation Club.</li> <li>• <b>The Bruce’s Mill Conservation Area</b> - a 10.3 km natural and woodchip trail, which is both open and forested.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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## 1.2 Current Cycling / Walking Related Policies & Initiatives

### 1.2.1 Federal

#### *Transport Canada*

Transport Canada released a report in **2005 titled “Strategies for sustainable transportation planning: a review of practices and options”**. The purpose of this report was to provide a foundation on which to build a set of guidelines for incorporating sustainable transportation principles into municipal transportation plans. Some of these principles include the creation of policies related to walking and cycling that can be used to develop effective, implementable transportation plans that promote sustainable transportation on a federal level. Some relevant strategies and policies, including the focus-area of sustainable transportation under which they fall and include:

### *Integration with Land Use Planning*

- Encourage desirable land use form and design (e.g. compact, mixed-use, pedestrian / bike-friendly) through transportation plan policies.

### *Environment & Health*

- Identify strategies to mitigate the air quality impacts of transportation activities.
- Identify strategies to mitigate noise impacts of transportation activities.
- Identify ways that transportation systems influence the achievement of the community's economic or social objectives. Provide support in the plan's strategic directions.
- Recognize the importance of ensuring access to opportunity for disabled and low-income persons, recent immigrants, youth and the elderly. Set goals and objectives for reducing the need to travel, improving transit mobility, and preserving minimum levels of service on roadways. Identify related strategies.
- Address the transportation needs of persons with disabilities, notably with regard to public transit service and barrier-free design in public rights-of-way.
- Recognize the public health impacts of transportation activity arising through road safety, pollution and physical activity levels. Identify effective strategies to strengthen positive impacts and lessen negative ones.
- Recognize the impact of transportation-related death and injury on quality of life and the economy. Set goals and objectives for multimodal road safety. Identify effective road safety strategies.

### *Modal Sustainability*

- Identify strategies, policies, facilities and services to increase walking, cycling, other active transportation, transit, ridesharing and teleworking.
- Recognize synergies and tensions among different modes (e.g. potential for multimodal cycling-transit trips, potential for modal shift from transit to ridesharing). Address possible implications for transportation objectives.
- Include objectives, strategies, policies, facilities and services to make transit operations more sustainable.

The publishing of this document and the recommended policies and strategies identified within it illustrate federal initiatives currently being undertaken to develop national standards and practices and improve conditions for walking and cycling across the Region.



## *Federation of Canadian Municipalities*

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) considers itself the national voice of municipal government since 1901. The organization fosters sustainable communities enjoying a high quality of life by promoting strong, effective and accountable municipal government. There are currently more than 1,775 members as the organization represents the interest of municipalities on policy and program matters that fall within the federal jurisdiction. Members include Canada's largest cities, small urban and rural communities, and 18 provincial and territorial municipal associations.

FCM has recently developed the Communities in Motion: Bringing Active Transportation to Life Initiative. This document is a key resource for all Canadian municipalities with the goals of promoting active transportation options, eliminating barriers to different travel mode choices and following a new path to promote active transportation modes such as walking and cycling, as part of everyday life. More specifically, the document outlines and promotes the inclusion of potential facilities such as off-road options. The document notes that "some pedestrians and cyclists stick to city streets to reduce travel time and distance. Others, however, prefer less stressful off-road routes that let them connect with nature. Lighting on trails improves safety and security, wayfinding systems help people get where they're going, bike ramps let cyclists get up and down staircases with ease, and dedicated bridges help everyone cross waterways, ravines and railway lines. Off-road routes are also important for recreation, and many communities are expanding their trails systems to boost tourism".

### **1.2.2 Province of Ontario**

The following sections identify some of the key provincial policies that impact active transportation (cycling and pedestrian) activities and trail development throughout the Region.

#### *Provincial Policy Statement*

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) is currently under review and will include a greater focus on healthy communities. The PPS sets the foundation for regulating land use and development within the Province and supports provincial goals. The PPS provides for appropriate development and protects resources of provincial interest. The vision of the land use planning system in the PPS is that the "long-term prosperity and social well-being of Ontarians depend on maintaining strong communities, a clean healthy environment and a strong economy."

The PPS promotes transportation choices that facilitate pedestrian and cycling mobility and other modes of travel. The term "transportation systems" under the PPS means a system consisting of corridors and rights-of-way for the movement of people and goods and the associated transportation facilities, which include cycling lanes and park'n'ride lots. Policies pertaining to transportation, such as cycling, pedestrians and transit are dispersed throughout the PPS.

## *Bill 51 – Plan Reform*

Approved in January 2007, Bill 51 reforms the Planning Act which provides the legislative framework for land use planning in Ontario. Bill 51 incorporates changes to the planning process that are intended to support intensification, sustainable development and protection of green space by giving municipalities greater powers, flexibility and tools to use land, resources and infrastructure more efficiently.

Bill 51 is consistent with Ontario's recent policy shift towards sustainable land use development and planning. For instance, Bill 51 permits municipalities to require environmentally sustainable design for both individual buildings and entire neighbourhoods. It also adds sustainable development as a provincial interest in the Provincial Policy Statement.

## *Municipal Act (2001)*

The Municipal Act, 2001 gives municipalities a broad new flexibility to deal with local circumstances, and to react quickly to local, economic, environmental or social changes. It recognizes municipalities as responsible and accountable governments with respect to matters within their jurisdictions. The Municipal Act provides policies relating to municipalities' jurisdiction over municipal highways and the maintenance of those highways, which has an impact on cycling.

## *Highway Traffic Act*

Bicycles are recognized as a vehicle, as defined in the Ontario Highway Traffic Act (HTA), and can operate on public roadways with the same rights and responsibilities as motor vehicles. However, bicycles are not permitted on controlled access freeways such as the 400 series highways and or any roadway designated for no cycling by municipal bylaws. The Highway Traffic Act contains a number of policies relating to bicycles, including bicycle lanes on municipal roadways, vehicles interacting with bicycles, bicycles being overtaken, and regulating or prohibiting bicycles on highways.

## *Places to Grow Act (2005) / The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe was adopted in June 2006 under the provisions of the proposed Places to Grow Act, 2005. This Act implements the Province's vision for developing stronger communities and managing the growth within those communities. The Growth Plan generally takes precedence over the PPS and municipal official plans. The Province requires municipalities to take into consideration the policies and directives of the Growth Plan in their planning activities. With respect to pedestrian and cycling, the Growth Plan envisions that "an integrated transportation network will allow people choices for easy travel both within and between urban centres throughout the region. public transit will be fast, convenient and affordable. Automobiles, while still a significant means of transport, will be only one of a variety of effective and well-used choices for transportation. Walking and cycling will be practical elements of our urban transportation systems. A healthy natural environment with clean air, land and water will characterize the Greater Golden Horseshoe".



The Growth Plan provides broad-level policies that direct more sustainable growth and development in the Greater Golden Horseshoe and specific targets for implementation among municipalities.

### *Greenbelt Plan*

Ontario's Greenbelt Plan works complementary with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe by providing clear direction as to what areas should be protected from growth in Ontario. It builds upon the policy framework established in the Provincial Policy Statement and builds upon the ecological protection provided by the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan as well as supports and complements the Parkway Belt West Plan and the Rouge Park Management Plans. The vision of the greenbelt presented in the plan is to provide for a diverse range of economic and social activities associated with rural communities, agriculture, tourism, recreation and resource uses. The culture, recreation and tourism goals for Ontario provided by the Greenbelt Plan related to cycling and pedestrian movement include:

- Provision of a wide range of publicly accessible built and natural settings for recreation including facilities, parklands, open space areas, trails and water based shoreline uses that support hiking, angling and other recreational activities; and
- Enabling continued opportunities for sustainable tourism development.

### *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)*

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act was passed on June 13, 2005 and is a provincially legislated policy which calls on the business community, public sector, not-for-profit sector and people with disabilities or their representatives to develop, implement and enforce mandatory standards. This policy makes Ontario the first jurisdiction in Canada to develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards which apply to both private and public sectors. These accessibility standards are the rules that businesses in Ontario should follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers of accessibility. The Built Environment is the most relevant standard that can be applied to trail planning, design and construction. The final draft of the standard was submitted to the Minister of Community and Social Services in 2010 but has yet to receive final approval. Conservation Lands staff at the TRCA are incorporating the recommendations provided in the final draft as minimum standards for trail design.

### *Ministry of Health Promotion (now part of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care)*

The former Ministry of Health Promotion and its functions have in 2011, been integrated into the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and serve as the lead Ministry for trails in Ontario. It has the responsibility for the coordination of recreational trail issues, policy development and planning.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care mission is to:

- Champion health promotion in Ontario, and inspire individuals, organizations, communities and governments to create a culture of health and wellbeing.
- Provide programs, services, tools and incentives that will enhance health and well-being.
- Make healthy choices easier.
- Harness the energy and commitment of other ministries, other levels of government, community partners, the private sector, the media and the public to promote health and wellbeing for all Ontarians.
- To make Ontario a leader in health promotion within Canada and internationally.

The Ministry of Health Promotion drafted a vision for Ontario's trails as:

***“A world class system of trails that capture the uniqueness and beauty of Ontario’s vast open spaces and natural and built cultural / heritage resources. People and places are connected through quality, diverse, safe, accessible and environmentally sensitive urban, rural and wilderness experience trails for recreational enjoyment, active living and tourism development.”***

### *The Ontario Trails Strategy*

The Provincial government has developed the Ontario Trails Strategy in response to the popularity of trail activities and infrastructure, the desire of trail organizations for government leadership, the need to protect provincial investment in trails and the significant trail issues or challenges that confront the future of Ontario's trails. The Ontario Trails Strategy is a long-term plan that will establish a strategic direction for government and stakeholders on the planning, management, promotion and use of trails, toward a healthier and more prosperous Ontario. Developed in collaboration with other ministries and a wide range of stakeholders in the community, the strategy supports continued cooperation among governments and the not-for-profit and private sectors. There are five strategic directions that comprise the Ontario Trails Strategy:

- Improving collaboration among stakeholders;
- Enhancing the sustainability of Ontario's trails;
- Enhancing the trail experience;
- Educating Ontarians about trails; and
- Fostering better health and a strong economy through trails.

A number of goals and strategies have also been identified to support each of the five strategic directions. The Ontario Trails Strategy recommends that trail organizations should develop common standards to guide the development and use of trails. This will help the trail system evolve to meet the particular needs of new users. Trail organizations also need more effective tools and better ways of distributing information to more Ontarians. As these challenges require coordination at all levels, the provincial government and



the public, not-for-profit and private sectors will continue to collaborate on priorities, roles and responsibilities, timeframes, and methods to strengthen and enhance existing and future trails in Ontario.

### *Ontario Ministry of Transportation Transit Supportive Guidelines*

The *Transit Supportive Guidelines*, 2012, outlines a set of guidelines to encourage transit-friendly planning and design through all communities in Ontario. The guidelines place emphasis on creating strategies that are supportive of walking and cycling activities to optimize the effectiveness of existing and future planned transit services. The *Transit Supportive Guidelines* outlines several strategies to support cycling and pedestrian activity including:

- 2.2.2** Streets should be designed with sidewalks and crossings that are comfortable to use, with frequent intersections and crossing points that provide multiple routing options and amenities that enhance the experience of walking to and from transit.
- 2.2.3** The design of streets should help support the establishment of an extensive cycling network, creating safe and convenient streets for cyclists that are linked with transit, minimize conflicts between cyclists and other modes of transportation and contain amenities to support cycling.

### **1.2.3 Ontario Parks**

#### *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserve Act, 2006*

The Provincial Parks and Conservation Act, 2006, is provincial legislation that provides a legal framework for managing Ontario's provincial parks and conservation lands with an emphasis on the maintenance and restoration of ecological integrity within provincial parks and conservation lands. The Act states, in Section 2.2.2, that provincial parks and conservation areas should provide a stage for "ecologically sustainable outdoor recreation" and the economic benefits associated with outdoor recreation. Section 6 of the Act states that parks are "dedicated to the people of Ontario and visitors for their inspiration, education, health, recreational enjoyment..."

With the development of the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail, many of the goals set out in the Provincial Parks and Conservation Act will be supported, including but not limited to the promotion of outdoor recreation through the provision of trails and active transportation facilities and supportive programming. In addition, one of the key benefits of the development of active transportation and trails related facilities is the increased quality of life and health which is also one of the key goals of the Act.

### **1.2.4 Metrolinx**

Metrolinx, formerly known as the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority (GTTA), was established in 2006 by the Government of Ontario. This agency of the Provincial Government was created in response to

the need for a centralized organization to improve the coordination and integration of all modes of transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Metrolinx was given a mandate to develop a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the GTHA based on a seamless, integrated transportation network, with a real focus on public transit, that will allow people and businesses to move more easily from York and Durham Regions, through the City of Toronto, Peel Region, Halton Region and onward to the City of Hamilton.

The RTP, adopted in November 2008 and entitled *The Big Move: Transforming Transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area*, is primarily focused on enhancing and expanding public transit. In addition, the Plan includes a number of proposed initiatives related to sustainable transportation that include the implementation of active transportation (walking and cycling). The Plan explicitly notes that the active transportation network includes on and off-road trails that accommodate non-motorized travel. Included among the 10 “strategies” in the Plan are:

#2 – Enhance and Expand Active Transportation; and

#7 – Build Communities that are Pedestrian, Cycling and Transit-Supportive.

Within each of these “strategies”, the Plan lists a series of specific priority actions and supporting policies. Recommendations relevant to active transportation within the two strategies identified above include:

- Plan and implement complete, integrated walking and cycling networks for the GTHA, including Toronto’s PATH system, that address key barriers such as bridges over 400-series highways, rail corridors and major rivers, and missing sidewalks on major roads. The cycling networks will bring every GTHA urban resident to within a maximum of one kilometre of a dedicated bicycling facility. This will be supported by a provincial funding commitment increased over time to at least \$20 million per year for municipalities to complete the walking and cycling networks;
- Create pilot bike-sharing programs in major urban centres;
- Research, standardize and promote best practices to integrate walking and cycling in road design, such as scramble intersections, bike boxes, and signal prioritization;
- Implement or expand safe cycling training programs, similar to the Commuter Cycling Skills Course offered in the Vancouver area, or the CAN-BIKE courses offered by municipalities across Canada; and
- Undertake Active Transportation Master Plans and incorporate them into municipal Transportation Master Plans.

## 1.2.5 Regional Municipality of York

### *Vision 2051*

In November 2011, the Regional Municipality of York submitted a Draft Vision for the Region up to 2051. Throughout the document, walking and cycling are mentioned in great detail and are clearly a strategic



priority for the future of the Region as well as its local municipalities. As an update to Vision 2026, this draft document will now be the blueprint for the future development of York Region. More specifically, the Region has placed a large focus on creating an intermodal transportation system which places a large emphasis on healthy living and communities as well as sustainability as a key benefit of implementing a walking and cycling system. The document clearly outlines the need for “prioritized alternative modes of travel for active transportation” including:

- Providing convenient and reliable alternative modes of travel and prioritizing walking, cycling, public transit and carpooling;
- Implementing a comprehensive pedestrian system and programs that encourage walking, cycling and transit use; and
- Facilitating an on and off-road cycling network that connects municipal cycling networks and trail systems, and creates a regional spine that will facilitate transportation by bicycle for utilitarian purposes and support the use of public transit.

### *Vision 2026*

York Region’s Strategic Plan (Vision 2026) acts as a blueprint for York by outlining key areas of focus and providing the framework for more detailed plans that will be undertaken by the Region.

The vision statement for Vision 2026 is: "York Region: Creating Strong, Caring and Safe Communities". This vision statement is supported by eight goals, which are further supported by a number of action areas. The action areas related to walking and cycling, which are intended to be the focus of municipalities in York Region, include:

- Encouraging pedestrian-friendly and transit-oriented neighbourhoods;
- Promoting alternative transportation methods that improve air quality, such as public transit and cycling;
- Supporting the efficient movement of people and goods in the Region through transportation enhancements;
- Ensuring mobility through accessible and affordable transportation;
- Encouraging the development of compact communities where people can walk to services; and
- Providing alternative forms of transportation such as walking and cycling.

### *Regional Official Plan (ROP)*

York Region’s Official Plan was adopted by Regional Council in December 2009 and approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in September 2010. The main structure of the first Regional Official Plan established in 1994 was focused on the three themes of sustainable natural environment, healthy communities and economic vitality. This focus on sustainability and the triple bottom line remains valid and has been further reinforced through the policies and structure the new Official Plan.

This triple bottom line approach will be used to evaluate a number of key emerging trends facing York Region, including:

- An aging and diverse society;
- An urbanizing region defined by vibrant centres;
- The impact of the built environment on social cohesion among and within communities;
- Climate change, energy conservation and renewable sources of energy; and
- Societal health issues such as obesity, mental illnesses, and cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.

Key elements of this Plan related to trails include:

- Higher standards for new communities;
- Mobility systems that prioritize walking, cycling and transit use;
- Linked and enhanced Regional Greenlands System; and
- Context-sensitive design for infrastructure projects (which has, to date, included the provision of natural heritage enhancements including trails).

The Official Plan outlines that the primary function and vision of the Regional Greenlands System is the protection of natural heritage features in a system of cores connected by corridors and linkages. The Regional Greenlands System also provides opportunities for passive recreation in a future Regional Trails System such as hiking and nature appreciation. Urban uses and infrastructure projects should contribute ecological gains to the Regional Greenlands System through enhancement and restoration, and the strategic creation of natural habitat.

The Official Plan also contains a number of key policies focussed on the development of natural heritage or Greenlands system trails including:

- 2.1.20** To work with local municipalities, conservation authorities and trail organizations on initiatives that contribute to, or complement, the creation of a Regional Greenlands System trails network.
- 2.2.5** That passive recreational uses, such as trails, may be permitted within key natural heritage features and key hydrologic features and their associated vegetation protection zones subject to the requirements of policy 2.2.4 of this Plan and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the Greenbelt Plan, and the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan.
- 5.6.14** That a Regional Greenlands System Plan shall be prepared that:
- e) includes a trail system, which is integrated into the mobility systems of the community;



- 7.2.13** To co-ordinate Regional and local pedestrian and cycling networks with trail connections to the Regional Greenlands System trails network, where appropriate.
- 7.2.69** To encourage the protection of abandoned railway rights-of-way for public uses such as trails, cycling paths, and transit.
- 7.5.9** To encourage complementary uses on utility corridors, such as trails, transit, commuter parking, community gardens, and appropriate vegetation.

### *York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (PCMP) & Appendix C (Planning & Design Guidelines)*

On April 24, 2008, York Regional Council endorsed the final Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (PCMP), a blueprint to develop walking and cycling infrastructure. The PCMP is intended to guide York Region as it works with local municipalities over the next 25 years and beyond to implement a comprehensive pedestrian system and an on- and off-road region-wide cycling system. The system plan consists of three phases: 0-5 years, 6-10 years, and 10+ years. The PCMP also includes a set of supporting policies and programs to promote walking and cycling in the Region.

The vision for the PCMP is based on the principle of assigning more priority to walking, cycling, public transit, carpooling, and transportation demand management initiatives. This will provide a more balanced and sustainable transportation system that places less emphasis on single occupant motor vehicle trips, thereby reducing traffic, and assists in reducing each individual's carbon footprint.

The PCMP is a long term (25 year) strategy that includes a 10 and a 25 year implementation plan with a practical strategy that identifies a recommended approach, including guidelines to implement the plan, and addresses priorities and phasing. The PCMP is positioned to be updated in 2012-2013. New features of the updated plan may include options for buffered bike lanes and cycle tracks.

Section 5.5.1 of the PCMP outlines potential network opportunities for future consideration by the Region. A key part of this piece, found on page 5-19, is the "Proposed Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario Route" which was recommended by members of the study team as well as the public. The master plan identifies a proposed corridor which utilizes existing and proposed off-road sections as well as a number of roads to complete the Lake to Lake Route while presenting an opportunity to promote watershed tourism. More specifically, the start of the route is proposed to be located at Lake Simcoe at the north end of Lake Drive and continue along key routes throughout the Region to ultimately connect with the existing Don Valley Trail in Wilket Creek Park (Edwards Gardens). The trail continues south along the Don Valley to Lake Ontario. A recommended implementation strategy, including schedules for implementation of the Lake-to-Lake route within the first 10 years of the master plan strategy are outlined in further detail in chapter 6.0 of the PCMP.

## *Regional Transportation Master Plan (TMP) Update*

The 2009 York Region Transportation Master Plan (TMP) Update is a strategic planning document designed to define a long-term transportation vision and integrated road and transit network plan that will support growth in York Region to the year 2031. The TMP integrates transportation and land use planning and is founded upon Official Plan goals and policies.

The TMP provides a comprehensive Transportation Vision for the Regional Municipality of York, which is articulated in a set of desirable “end-states” dealing with:

- Reduced amounts of travel on a per person basis;
- Employer based Travel Demand Management (TDM) initiatives;
- Reduced dependence on automobiles;
- Universal access to public transit;
- Integrated transit services and fares among GO, TTC and other GTA transit operators serving York Region;
- Transit accessible human services;
- Efficient and safe movement of goods,
- Efficiently used infrastructure; infrastructure in a “state of good repair”;
- Strong protection for the environment;
- Adequate and dedicated long term funding sources; and
- Effective public consultation.

## *York Region Sustainability Strategy*

York Region has prepared a Sustainability Strategy, intended to provide a long-term framework for making smarter decisions about growth management and municipal responsibilities that better integrate the economy, environment and community. The strategy underscores the importance of recognizing how choices of everyday life can have lasting impacts on sustainability. The Sustainability Strategy is guided by the following principles:

- Provide a long-term perspective on sustainability;
- Evaluate using the triple bottom-line elements of environment, economy and community;
- Create a culture of continuous improvement: minimizing impact and maximizing innovation;
- Identify specific short-term achievable actions that contribute to a sustainability legacy;
- Set targets, monitor and report progress;
- Foster partnerships and public engagement;
- Raise the level of sustainability awareness through education, dialogue and reassessment; and
- Promote sustainable lifestyles and re-evaluation of our consumption and expectations.



The Sustainability Strategy outlines a number of actions to be taken by the Region. One of these actions is to promote the Region's Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines to provide opportunities to shape urban form that is transit-supportive, mixed-use and efficient, and provides a sense of place to residents and employees. The Sustainability Strategy also outlines an action to prepare and adopt a York Region Pedestrian and Bicycling Master Plan, which will further support sustainable transportation. Since this time, the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan has been developed and adopted by Council within York Region. Sustainable transportation is a key to achieving this action and a key to York Region's future growth.

### *The Everyday Guide to the York Regional Forest (2002)*

The York Regional Forest (YRF) has been greening communities for over 80 years. Through careful management, originally by the Department of Lands and Forests, subsequently the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, and now by the Regional Municipality of York, the York Regional Forest has grown to over 2200 hectares (5000 acres) and 18 Regional forest tracts. The diversity of the Region's forest – with plantations, natural woodlands, treed swamps, and creeks – means that each visit can be a new experience. Residents and visitors alike are welcome to hike in the forest or take part in guided walks, forest festivals, and other events that are supported by Regional staff, volunteers, and professional outdoor educators.

With increasing population growth in recent decades, the York Regional Forest is an increasingly important resource for future generations to experience the ecological wonders of a diverse and healthy forest. Management considerations for the forest are driven by ecological considerations while providing wildlife, recreational, aesthetic, economic, and research values. In 2001, York Region was recognized internationally for its "environment first" management of the York Regional Forest. The forest was certified as sustainably managed by Smartwood in accordance with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards. The York Regional Forest was the first publicly owned forest in Canada to receive Forest Stewardship Council certification.

Trails in the Regional Forest are managed co-operatively by York Region staff, the Regional Forest Advisory Team, and other user groups. The Oak Ridges Trail Association is an additional partner for the management and upkeep of the York Regional Forest trail where the Oak Ridges Moraine passes through the Regional Forest.

### *The Greenlands Trails System Concept Study*

The Greenlands Trails Study was prepared in response to requests by residents and staff of York Region to enhance trails throughout the nine local municipalities. Trail related policies found within York Region's Official Plan 2010 and the recommended actions of the Natural Heritage Strategic Directions Paper also supported the development of a Greenlands Trails System. The Region's Natural Heritage Discussion Paper established the vision for the Greenlands Trails System Concept Study, which is "to create a

Greenlands Trails System that connects local municipal trail systems, and provides residents with the opportunity to experience the Greenlands System throughout York Region.”

The Greenlands Trails System Concept Study recommends that the development and implementation of a Greenlands Trails System takes place as a complimentary component of the Region’s award-winning Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (PCMP), which provides a guide to improve both pedestrian and cycling environments that support and promote alternative modes of active transportation that will result in more liveable, walkable communities.

The Greenlands System is comprised of cores, corridors, and linkages. These connections result in a system that facilitates the movement of animals, plant dispersion, and provides opportunities for pathways for walking and cycling, and ultimately, the creation of a Greenlands Trails System.

### *Development Charges By-law Background Study*

The DC Background Study was prepared and completed in 2007, in accordance with the Development Charges Act, 1997 to support the calculation of new rates to be included in the update to the 2003 Development Charges By-law. In order to service the anticipated growth for York Region, additional infrastructure including transportation alternatives is required. Development charges are imposed to recover growth-related capital costs from the development that causes the costs of growth. In accordance with the Development Charges Act (the DC Act), development charges are imposed where the development of land increases the need for capital services. This “growth pays for growth” method is identified in the Financial Management Policies of the Regional Official Plan and ensures that existing taxpayers are not burdened with the cost of growth. The document provides a summary of estimated transportation infrastructure Costs including roads, transit and subway for a total of approximately \$3.7 billion through to the year 2031.

### *New Communities Guidelines (Preliminary Draft)*

The preliminary draft of *New Communities Guidelines* was completed in 2012, to assist with the implementation of Section 5.2 (Sustainable Buildings) and Section 5.6 (New Community Areas) of the *Regional Official Plan (ROP)*. The *New Communities Guidelines* has been developed to support local municipalities to create complete and healthy communities through several guidelines, including those specific to sustainable transportation. These guidelines are focused on providing residents of the Region and visitors with alternate modes of transportation such as walking and cycling. In addition, the design and implementation of walking and cycling facilities should be safe and accessible for users of all ages and abilities. These guidelines reflect *Policy 5.2.7* of the *ROP*, outlining “that communities be designed to ensure accessibility to people of all ages, culture and abilities”.



## 1.2.6 Local Municipalities

The following provides details on the policies and plan pertaining to cycling, trails and active transportation which have been developed by the Region's local area municipalities. It is important to note that the study team also undertook a review of local municipal Official Plans, Community Plans and Secondary Plans. Each of the local municipalities in York Region (and their communities and hamlets), has made it a strategic priority to support trail, cycling and active transportation route development through long and short term policies in their respective Official Plans, Master Plans and other policy and design guideline documents. A brief overview of each local municipality efforts is noted herein.

### *Town of Aurora*

In November of 2009, the Aurora Trails Sub-Committee undertook an in-depth review of existing and proposed municipal trails within the Town with the primary objective of identifying opportunities to establish off-road, barrier-free, multi-purpose trails in a natural setting. The report set out a framework for the development of trails as well as a series of maps that illustrate trail hierarchy and phased implementation.

In January 2010, the Town completed their Parks and Recreation Master Plan, which guides and directs leisure and other services, activities, programs, and facilities. The research conducted as part of this study clearly identifies the current use of walking and hiking facilities and growing demand for facilities with an 86% household participation in such activities.

Based on the work identified above, in 2010, the Town of Aurora in collaboration with their Trails Sub-Committee developed the Aurora Trails Master Plan. Adopted in principle in early 2011, this plan is a document that guides the development and operation of trails throughout the Town in the short to long term. The plan proposes two draft candidate trail routes for both Aurora West and East. The proposed long-term network consists of 37.2 km and 18.4 km of existing on and off-road facilities as well as 93.0 km and 30.7 km of new on and off-road facilities. These facilities are to include soft surface multi-use trails (78.3 km), in-road boulevard bike paths (14.0 km) as well as additions to the existing Nokiidaa Trail (1.2 km) and the Oak Rides Moraine Trail (11.1 km). The Master Plan also provides a wide range of trail recommendations and guidelines with respect to trail facility design, implementation, maintenance and promotion/education.

The Town is currently looking into developing a Master Transportation Operations Study, which will ultimately have a component that focuses on bicycle facilities. Though primarily on-road, this work will be a strong complement to the work that was completed for the Trails Master Plan.

### *Town of East Gwillimbury*

In May of 2009, the Town developed their Transportation Master Plan, which was adopted to manage the increasing growth by engaging in sustainable transportation policies and initiatives. Throughout the development of the Transportation Master Plan there was a commitment to the promotion and development

for non-motorized modes of transportation. Specifically these included recommended pedestrian and cycling improvements that promote the need for a variety of facility types, multi-use trails, and off-road trails.

That same year, the Town developed and adopted the East Gwillimbury Natural Heritage System Study. The study is a review of natural heritage (environment) policies associated with community plans. The plan also identifies an approach to natural heritage protection that is consistent across the Town and with the Town's goal to be a leader in sustainability. The policy emphasizes sustainable development and environmental design and outlines criteria for the evaluation natural heritage features.

In addition, the Community Park, Recreation & Culture Strategic Master Plan was adopted in November 2009 outlining the need and importance of the provision of trails and pathways throughout the Town of East Gwillimbury. The Master Plan is a tool to determine the needs and priorities related to services and facilities with regard to parks, recreation, and cultural demands of East Gwillimbury residents. The telephone survey conducted for the Community Park, Recreation & Culture Master Plan indicates that there is a high demand for walking, hiking, running, and jogging facilities as well as facilities and trails for cycling or mountain biking. The Master Plan outlines actions for the future development of trails and necessary facilities that address these demands.

Building on the work previously completed, the Town's Leisure Services Department initiated the development of an Active Transportation & Trails Master Plan in 2010 in response to the 2008 Official Plan review as well as the implementation of the 2010 Transportation Master Plan. The plan focuses primarily on non-motorized travel modes such as hiking, cycling, and walking on both town roads as well as lands owned by the Town. The recommended network is composed of both on- and off-road facilities, which will ultimately link walking and cycling with public transit, roadway characteristics, as well as the different user groups throughout the Town. The active transportation and trails network proposes a total of 343.2 km of additional walking and cycling facilities. Of those facilities the plan proposes 53.46 km of multi-use trails to be considered for implementation by the Town. The plan also proposes trail policies with regard to implementation that are consistent with those priority facilities and routing identified in the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan for York Region, as well as the 10-year capital works plan. The final report has been submitted to the Town for adoption in principle by Council in 2012.

### *Town of Georgina*

As part of the Sutton / Jackson's Point Secondary Plan adopted in June 2010, the Town of Georgina developed a "Trails Plan" as part of Schedule D of the report. The Trails Plan identified the development of an extension of the Lake Simcoe Trail as well as off-road cycling facilities and cycling facilities on Regional Roads and Rights-of-Way building on the existing trails and facilities found within the Town. More specifically, within the secondary plan, trail related development is identified and supported through policies and proposed enhancements to the existing system including sidewalks and multi-use trails (both paved and natural). The proposed enhancements are meant to help create a "well-connected public trail system



that promotes active transportation as well as active recreation touring, particularly in the form of walking, cycling, rollerblading and skiing in a manner that is sensitive to the environment and private land holdings” throughout the Town of Georgina. The Town of Georgina trails system is illustrated in its Leisure Services Master Plan, which is accessible on the Town’s website. The proposed enhancements to the existing network are illustrated in Schedule D in the Secondary Plan.

### *King Township*

As outlined in Section 1.1.2, King Township has developed an extensive network of trail facilities linking the four rural communities of King City, Nobleton, Hamlet and Schomberg. Each of the rural communities has developed a community or secondary plan which is used to help guide future development including trails and cycling facilities.

More specifically, in King City’s Community Plan, Section 8.5 provides details on the future of trails throughout the community and notes that “the township shall encourage the development of a system of pedestrian / bicycle trails to link the community together, as part of the Natural Heritage System. Where new areas are being developed, routes for the trail system shall be established as part of the Functional Servicing Study...” The Nobleton Community Plan also outlines future plans for the development of an Open Space Master Plan in Section 3.8.4 Trails as well as policies to define and guide pedestrian and cycling development throughout the Community. Lastly, the Schomberg Community Plan presents pedestrian and cycling information in Section 4.4 including specific policies which speak to the development of a pedestrian and bicycle path network integrated with “natural amenities such as streams, valleys, public parkland and other open space areas.”

### *City of Markham*

The City of Markham provides the community with maps as part of the Cycling Master Plan. The Master Plan includes trails as well as cycling systems. Additionally, the City has developed their own Pathways and Trails Master Plan, available on the City’s website, which outlines all the trails within Markham. The City of Markham has a Cycling and Pedestrian Advisory Committee that oversees cycling, pedestrian, and trail facilities.

More recently, the City completed a Cycling, Pathways and Trails 5-year (2010 – 2015) Implementation Plan, which proposes a strategy for functional design as well as prioritized initiatives for consideration by the City. In addition, the City of Markham is currently in the midst of an Environmental Assessment for the “Multi-use Pathway from Toogood Pond to Milne Dam Conservation Area to Bob Hunter Memorial Park”. This project involves evaluating the options for, and recommending the alignment of a pathway following the Rouge valley corridor from the northwest part of Markham to the southeast. A number of pathway segments have been in place for some time, and the focus of this current EA is to complete the missing pathway links and in doing so, recommending appropriate locations for pedestrian bridge crossings of the Rouge to connect neighbourhoods along the valley corridor. The concept of a continuous route along the

Rouge Valley corridor was envisioned in the City of Markham's Trails and Cycling Master Plans, both of which were approved by Council in June 2010.

### *Town of Newmarket*

In 2010 the Town of Newmarket completed their Trail Guide which provides residents and visitors with information on the existing as well as proposed future trail facilities throughout the Town. More specifically, the Town has been divided into four areas to highlight trail loops and facilities as well as key natural features. The Town's extensive and well-connected trail systems, including the popular Tom Taylor Trail can be found in the Town of Newmarket Parks and Cultural Sites map on the Town's website.

### *Town of Richmond Hill*

Approved in 2004, the Town of Richmond Hill is in the process of implementing the Trails Master Plan. The plan proposes an inter-connected Town-wide system providing safe and accessible routes through the Town's parks and open spaces. The Plan identifies planned park / open space trails as well as a conceptual alignment of the Oak Ridges Moraine Trails. In addition, the plan also identifies potential destination trail systems throughout the Town as well as trail intersection nodes for consideration by the Town.

In 2008, the Town undertook a study to develop a detailed Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan that ultimately included a network inventory and pedestrian and cycling facility design review, which proposed town-wide cycling and multi-use trail improvements. The trails are proposed along major and local corridors facilitating connections to residential neighbourhoods and key destinations throughout the Town. The Master Plan, which was adopted in principle by Council in 2009, proposed a total of 36.7 km of multi-use trails in addition to 897.1 km combining bike lanes, paved shoulders, signed bike routes, signed bike routes with or without edge lines or sharrows and sidewalks over a 15-year horizon. Since approving the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan the Town has made significant progress in implementing by 2010 the entire first phase of the on-road cycling component of this plan. In 2011, the Town of Richmond Hill also created Town-wide Cycling and Trails map for residents and visitors.

### *City of Vaughan*

In 2007, the City of Vaughan adopted their Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan Study with the goal of creating a comprehensive pedestrian and cycling network of on- and off-road facilities to build on the existing work completed. The network is based on the existing road grid of north-south and east-west routes spaced approximately 1 to 2 km apart, which ensures that residents would be within a 15 minute walk or 5 minute bike ride from the network. The facilities proposed are divided into four classes, the first of which is Class 1: Multi-use Recreation or Boulevard Pathway, and the last of which is Class 4: Footpath / Hiking Trail. In Class 1 there are three facility types proposed: community multi-use recreational pathway, neighbourhood multi-use recreation pathway, and community multi-use boulevard pathway. Class 4 is



made up of footpaths and hiking trails that are typically single-track routes with a soft surface intended for pedestrian use. In total, there were 216.53 km of the Class 1 facility type and 15.60 km of Class 4 proposed for development by the Master Plan.

Since adopting their plan in 2007 the City made some progress in implementing both on and off-road segments of their Pedestrian and Cycling Trails Master Plan as part of ongoing development initiatives in the city.

### *Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville*

The Town of Whitchurch Stouffville has developed a trails map which identifies and illustrates existing and proposed:

- Bicycle Paths / Sidewalks;
- Bike Routes;
- Grade Separation;
- Heritage Walkways;
- Naturalized Trails;
- Off-Road Multi-use Trails;
- On-Road Signed Bicycle Routes; and
- Sidewalk / Bike Routes.

In addition, the map also provides users with information on key access points and trail amenities such as parking and washroom facilities. The Town is currently in the process of developing an extensive trail system which will ultimately connect the large forested areas throughout York Region.

### **1.2.7 Toronto Regional Conservation Authority**

The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) acquires land throughout their jurisdiction as a tool to protect environmentally significant natural heritage lands, to regenerate and rehabilitate degraded areas, and to provide relief from flood and erosion hazards.

Both the Toronto Region Conservation Authority and the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) have created natural heritage systems for their watersheds. The Toronto Region Conservation Authority's Terrestrial Natural Heritage System Strategy comprises 3 major components: terrestrial natural cover, natural processes, and the linkages between them. The system has been mapped and analysed for its current health and strategic areas have been identified to improve the overall health of the system.

Lands acquired by the Toronto Region Conservation Authority consist of valley and stream corridors, the Lake Ontario waterfront, wetlands, kettle lakes, woodlots, flood control and reservoir lands, and significant properties along the Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine. The Toronto Region Conservation

Authority lands represent a greenway system that offers a variety of opportunities for public use and enjoyment that are compatible with the resource base.

Property acquisition is becoming more challenging for the Toronto Region Conservation Authority due to rapid growth in the area and limited funding from partners. To address property acquisition, the Toronto Region Conservation Authority adopted a project called the Natural Heritage Lands Protection and Acquisition Project 2001-2005. Under this initiative, the natural heritage system can be secured using the following methods:

- Fee simple – this is the purchase of the total interest in a property.
- Easements – this includes Conservation Easements. Easements are the acquisition of specific or limited rights of use from an owner. Easements can provide for the protection of a resource, trail construction, public access, and construction and maintenance of regeneration works.
- Covenants – covenants restrict an owner from undertaking specific activities on all or a portion of the property.
- Leases and Agreements – leases and agreements, depending on their terms, can range from little more than a right to occupy to almost an equivalent of fee simple interest.

### *Rouge Park*

On May 4, 2012, the federal government announced that Rouge Park would become Canada's first national urban park. The Rouge National Urban Park, managed by the TRCA, is over 47 square kilometres in size and is made up of protected park land in the Rouge River, Petticoat Creek and Duffins Creek Watershed within and around the City of Toronto. More specifically, the park supports a system of trails and natural heritage experiences throughout the Urban Landscape which highlight the environmental features which the City of Toronto and York Region. In addition to 6 formal trails (the Cedar Trail, Master Trail, Orchard Trail, Riverside Trail, Woodland Trail and Vista Trail), natural area also highlights views and vistas as well as key tourist destinations such as the Rouge Beach. A number of strategic policies and plans have been developed to ensure the successful management and growth of the park as well as the trails and programming used to promote it. These policies include:

- The Rouge Park Management Plan (1994);
- The Rouge North Management Plan (2001);
- Natural Heritage Actions for the 21st Century; and
- The Heritage Appreciation and Visitor Experience Plan.

The Rouge Park is considered a key destination for residents and visitors of the City of Toronto as well as Regions and municipalities outside including York Region. The Park could be considered a major attraction and a potential linkage for the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail.



## *The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Trails Planning and Design Guidelines*

The Trail Planning and Design Guidelines handbook is intended to serve as a guide to the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of trails in the watersheds of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. It is intended to assist both public agencies and trail user groups as an introduction to trail planning and design.

These guidelines serve as minimum standards for trails development on lands owned by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). Where municipal or other public agencies are involved, they are intended as guidelines for trail development. The intention is to foster a common level of understanding in respect of trails development between jurisdictions. The long term vision is to achieve a more extensive level of trails throughout the Greater Toronto Area.

The TRCA is in the process of undertaking a review and update of the Trail Planning and Design Guidelines handbook. The review will consider new thinking around trail construction, including the design of sustainable trails, and will include updated standards and guidelines for trail planning, design and implementation and is expected to be completed in 2012.

### *Oak Ridges Trail Strategic Plan (2008)*

The Strategic Plan provides details and considerations when developing the optimum trail corridor. These include:

- Design to provide a continuous east-west trail across the Oak Ridges Moraine;
- Locate in the Natural Core Areas and the Natural Linkage Areas to the extent possible;
- Located on public and provide lands where long-term trail security can be achieved; and
- Consideration of the Selection Criteria for the Optimum Trail Alignment for identifying the location of the trail within the corridor as follows:
  - Location of public roads and traveled road allowances to the extent possible;
  - Designed to minimize contact with roads and non-compatible trails;
  - Site to follow a safe route when crossing public highways and roads, steep slopes, streams and rivers etc. and designed to avoid hazardous road intersections;
  - Designed to provides access for all people including persons with disabilities;
  - Sites to provide good opportunities for loop and side trails as well as connections with other hiking trails;
  - Designed to maintain and where possible improve or restore the ecological integrity of the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan Area;
  - Sited to avoid sensitive cultural and ecological areas and minimize impact on the natural environment;
  - Sited to minimize disturbance and interference with adjacent land uses;
  - Designed to support and enhance local and regional tourism initiatives;

- Sited to take advantage of scenic opportunities; and
- Designed to support low-impact, non-motorized recreation and physical activity to promote health and wellness.

### *Oak Ridges Corridor Nature Reserve Trail Plan (Draft)*

The Plan developed for the Oak Ridges Corridor was undertaken to protect the high quality habitats and sensitive plants and wildlife found on the lands. The Oak Ridges Corridor Park is enhanced by over 175 hectares of green space owned by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to the east of Bayview Avenue. Referred to as the Oak Ridges Corridor Nature Reserve (ORCNR) lands, and formerly the Oak Ridges Corridor Park East (ORCPE) lands, this property is dominated by forests and wetlands, and consists of many unique and sensitive natural areas.

This management plan lays out a series of management recommendations and actions that seek to protect the natural heritage system while also providing for enjoyable nature-based recreation for visitors. Some key management recommendations include:

- Restore damaged areas and agricultural fields to forest, wetland and meadow habitat;
- Establish a trail system, featuring primary and secondary trails, that will protect the natural system while providing nature-based recreation opportunities;
- Engage local residents and community groups in a stewardship program to care for the Oak Ridges Corridor Park and Oak Ridges Corridor Nature Reserve lands;
- Maintain the fields south of Bethesda Sideroad for active agriculture or similar use (e.g. community gardens); and
- Conduct regular inventory and monitoring of the flora, fauna and overall condition of both the aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

Chapter 6.0 of the plan provides a more detailed analysis of the trail system including a proposed trail plan and trail development recommendations for the area. The trail plan is proposed to consist of a primary trail that will be an extension of the spine trail in the main Oak Ridges Corridor Park and which will form part of the inter-regional Oak Ridges Trail. The primary trail, which will run north-south and east-west through the property, will be enhanced by a series of secondary trails connecting to the planned communities, as well as providing recreational loops to allow visitors to enjoy the many scenic vistas on the property. Primary and secondary trailheads will be provided at various points around the property, including parking lots on Bethesda Sideroad and Stouffville Sideroad.

### **1.2.8 Lake Simcoe Regional Conservation Authority**

Since 1951, the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) has secured 1,254 hectares (3,099 acres) of environmentally sensitive lands within the Lake Simcoe watershed, including wetlands, upland



forests, and shoreline. The LSRCA has a commitment to maintain these lands for environmental protection as they form the core of the natural heritage land base. These natural heritage lands are acquired through the financial support of regional, municipal, and provincial partners, combined with private donations. Traditional recreation opportunities on these lands include hiking, picnicking, cross country skiing, and birding, as well as providing a natural setting for outdoor education.

Similar to the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, the LSRCA experienced funding limitations for land securement during the 1990's, and initiated the Natural Heritage System Land Securement Program in 2006. Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority's Natural Heritage System Land Securement Project 2006-2010 was approved by the LSRCA Board of Directors on March 24, 2006 and received Ministerial Approval from the Ministry of Natural Resources on December 31, 2007. Under this project, the LSRCA may acquire properties through:

- Fee Simple;
- Conservation Easements;
- Covenants; and
- Leases and Agreements.

The LSRCA's Natural Heritage System for the Lake Simcoe watershed is based on the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and identifies a natural heritage system and a policy strategy to protect its features and functions.

The ultimate goal is to secure and protect an additional 1,000 hectares (2,471 acres) of ecologically sensitive land within the watershed to ensure the natural functions of these lands are maintained, to provide for flood and erosion control and to conserve these important lands for the benefit of the people within the watershed. Target areas for land securement of ecologically sensitive lands have already been identified, along with evaluation criteria and securement protocols for this five-year project.

Lands owned by the LSRCA comprise of valley and stream corridors, portions of the Lake Simcoe shoreline, environmentally significant areas, provincial wetlands, significant forest lands, flood control and reservoir lands, and properties in the Oak Ridges Moraine complex, as well as the Beaver River Wetlands. Approximately 2/3 of the LSRCA lands contain wetlands, which assists in achieving the Provincial objectives to preserve these unique environmentally sensitive areas.

### **1.2.9 City of Toronto**

The City of Toronto, recognizing the importance of major linear multi-use paved trail systems, such as the Don Valley Trail and Humber River Trail to commuter cyclists, moved responsibility for the expansion and maintenance of these major trail and cycling routes to the Transportation Services Department in 2008. This was done to better integrate the City's efforts to implement the Toronto Bike Plan and to recognize the transportation function of some of the City's major trail systems.

In 2009, the City of Toronto's Transportation Services Department received funding to develop seven multi-use trails within hydro and rail corridors across the City. The multi-use trail projects will be developed within the Finch Hydro Corridor, Gatineau Hydro Corridor, CN Leaside, and Scarborough Pit Spur (former rail corridors). These projects will add approximately 30 kilometres of new and 4 kilometres of upgraded off-road bike trails to the City's bikeway network and represents the largest expansion of the City's trail system in a single year. As part of these projects, Toronto City Council has approved the installation of 13 new signal installations, 5 road alterations, and the improvement of 20 existing traffic signals. Considerations are being made to connect these new trail projects with existing multi-use paths and other sections of the bikeway network across the City.

### *Natural Environment Trails Program*

The City of Toronto has established the Natural Environment Trails Program in response to the City's growing population and the increasing pressure on natural areas from recreational uses. The objective of the program is to protect and restore recreational nature trails and the woodlands, meadows, and wetlands surrounding them. The City also seeks to engage and partner with community groups and organizations who are interested in trail sustainability and natural heritage protection.

The City of Toronto maintains a comprehensive trail system that spans the City and includes the following:

- 5 watersheds, each with trail systems running through natural environment areas. There are also waterfront trails and self-guided Discovery Walks;
- Toronto's trails wind through forests, across wildflower meadows and along rivers, wetlands, and ponds;
- Herons, hawks, deer, rabbits, muskrats, and butterflies are just some of the wildlife seen from Toronto's trails; and
- There are trails for hiking, mountain biking, running, cycling, horseback riding, and dog-walking.

### *City of Toronto Bike Plan - Shifting Gears (2001)*

The City of Toronto Bike Plan, 2001, was developed as a vision for cycling in the City of Toronto with the overall goal of "shifting gears" towards a more bicycle friendly City. The plan sets out integrated principles, objectives and recommendations with regard to safety, education and promotional programs in addition to cycling related infrastructure including a comprehensive bikeway network. The plan itself was developed to guide cycling development throughout the City of Toronto in a way that is more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.

The primary goals of the Bike Plan are:

- To double the number of bicycle trips made in the City of Toronto, as a percentage of total trips, by 2011; and
- To reduce the number of bicycle collisions and injuries.



The Plan provides detailed recommendations for future cycling route development and design including but not limited to the design of bicycle friendly streets, the design of a bikeway network for the City, Safety and Education programming, Cycling and Transit Linkages, Cycling Promotion, and Bicycle Parking. In addition, a set of design guidelines and details were developed and provided to the City to help guide the design of future cycling routes and facilities. In total the plan proposed five different cycling facilities to be implemented throughout the City. Included in these routes and facilities was 460 km of new bike lanes, 250 km of new bike routes, 21 km of new right-of-way / boulevard trails, 82 km of new utility corridor trails and 15 km of new park trails for a total of 828 km of new cycling facilities.

The City has adopted a Bikeway Trails Implementation Plan (2012) that focuses on connecting existing off-road trails and includes an audit of the City's existing major trail systems

### 1.3 Existing Cycling / Hiking Organizations

#### 1.3.1 Canadian Cycling / Hiking Organizations

The ***Trans Canada Trail Organization*** is a not-for-profit organization which promotes and assists in the development and use of the Trans Canada Trail in every province and territory across Canada. The Organization also provides funding to local trail builders to support the development of trails throughout their towns, communities etc. Today more than 16,500 km of Trans Canada Trail have been developed. Ultimately, the trail is proposed to span 22,000 km linking 1,000 communities. Though there are currently no routes found within York Region, the Trans Canada Trail provides linkage to the South in the City of Toronto along the waterfront which could be linked with a Lake to Lake Cycling Route network from Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario.

In addition to the Trans Canada Trail Organization, ***Canada Trails*** is an organized directory of trail sports which facilitates self-propelled activities including information on trails, clubs, events and related services. In addition, mapping is also provided to illustrate the location of major trails as well as trail listings including ratings submitted by visitors to the trails. This catch-all website and organization provides more specific details on:

- Bicycling including road routes, city biking, clubs and tours;
- Mountain biking including mountain biking trails and events;
- Hiking including hiking trails and clubs;
- Multi-use trails including the 15,000 km of Trans Canada Trail and other multi-use recreation trails;
- Cross country skiing including details on more than 500 ski areas, plus clubs and events;
- Guide services including companies offering guided outdoor activities and outdoor program; and
- Lodging including accommodations located in tranquil settings and offering easy access to outdoor activities.

### 1.3.2 Ontario Based Cycling / Hiking Organizations

The **Ontario Trails Council (OTC)** is a not for profit organization that promotes the development of trails throughout Ontario. The Trillium Trail Network (TTN) is an initiative of the Ontario Trails Council that represents an opportunity for trails to link together between regions and communities in Ontario. The Trillium Trail Network consists of Ontario Trails Council member trails registering their trail as a system member. The Trillium Trail Network is designed to be a province-wide system of trails.

Overall, the Trillium Trail Network works to:

- Make Ontario a more attractive place to live and visit;
- Promote trail travel and tourism;
- Increase the number of trails available for use;
- Improve trail management as Trillium Trail Network trails will work to implement accepted trail standards;
- Promote ecological conservation;
- Provide access to local history and community culture; and
- Promote accessibility for persons with disabilities.

There are a number of trail organizations in Ontario that are represented or organized by the Ontario Trails Council, including the **Bruce Trail Association**, **Trans Canada Trails**, the **Rideau Trail Association**, and more locally, the **Nokiidaa Trail Association**, and the **Oak Ridges Trail Association**. These associations promote and maintain trails, provide hiking information and, in some cases, provide guided hikes.

**The Waterfront Regeneration Trust** is another prominent trail organization in the Province of Ontario which has been an instrumental part of Lake Ontario's regeneration. The Trust has developed over 900 km of trails, providing a connection between key Ontario communities along the lakeshore. The goal of the trust is to ensure that people are able to access the water within the Province and that it is worth getting to. As of 2007, the Waterfront Trail has extended its signed route to the Quebec Border to connect with Quebec's La Route Verte in addition to the 780 km of designated (signed) and 120 km of undesignated (signage yet to be installed and / or gaps in alignment) already in place. More recently the trust completed 52 projects that comprise the Expansion and Enhancement of the Waterfront Trail and Greenway.

**Welcome Cyclists** is a program run by Transportation Options, a non-profit organization which is dedicated to fostering sustainable travel and tourism ideas and innovations by engaging in research, project development, and promotion of choices that are healthy, integrated, convenient, economically beneficial and environmentally sound. Transportation Options works in partnership with businesses, government, and the community to promote and develop economic benefits and innovations related to sustainable transportation and tourism. The Welcome Cyclists program provides cycle tourists and enthusiasts with an online database of information connecting retailers, accommodations, attractions, bike shops and rentals, tours, wineries, etc. which are supportive of and provide cycling infrastructure, such as



bicycle parking and overnight storage. There are currently 3 accommodations and a bike / rental shop which support the welcome cyclists program in Markham as well as some other shops and attractions within the Town of Newmarket, City of Vaughan and King City.

### **1.3.3 Regional and Local Cycling / Hiking Organizations & Clubs**

The Nokiidaa Trail Association represents the Nokiidaa Trail which links three communities within York Region including Aurora, Newmarket and East Gwillimbury. The trail route is along the East Holland River connecting local parks and green spaces, past wetlands and historical cultural sites and also supports links to a number of other trails.

Established in 1973 and officially inaugurated in May 1992, the ORTA is committed to developing and securing the Oak Rides Trail in order to “promote an appreciation and respect for the Moraine’s ecological, cultural, and scenic integrity, with the aim of retaining a trail corridor on its natural state”. In previous years the association developed a detailed guide and system for public recreational trails along the Moraine spanning from Albion Hills to the west to Northumberland Forest in the East.

It is important to note that throughout the Region and its local municipalities there are a number of cycling clubs (e.g. the Newmarket Eagles) and bike shop affiliated cycling groups who are keenly interested in the development and future use of a cycling route connecting Lake Ontario to Lake Simcoe. Their input and interest will be valuable throughout the development and implementation of the route as well as the development of future signage alternatives.

## **1.4 Existing Regional AT Programs & Outreach**

In addition to the cycling infrastructure and policies which speak to the development of cycling routes and walking trails throughout the Region of York it is important to also introduce supportive programming, outreach and educational initiatives. These initiatives are integral to ensure that users of cycling and trail routes and facilities are sufficiently informed of how to safely and efficiently use the infrastructure. The following is a summary of key outreach initiatives and programs available throughout the Region.

- **“York Cycling”** – an interactive webpage developed by the Regional Municipality of York which provides users with a wide range of information on cycling including but not limited to bike maps, safety and educational information, bikeway projects currently underway, cycling and transit, bike clubs as well as reports, plans and policies. In addition, the webpage includes an interactive map of existing and planned cycling facilities which can be used to help plan trips and locate key cycling destinations throughout the Region.
- **Bicycle Theft Prevention Program** – including key information on how to avoid having ones bicycle stolen. Also promotes the registration of bicycles with York Regional Police online: <https://onlinereporting.yrp.ca/BikeRegistration.html>
- **Educational Information on Proper Cycling Skills** – including key information on how to cycle with motor vehicles, make left and right turns at intersections and change lanes etc. In addition, information on Bicycle Hand Signals is presented.
- **CAN – Bike Safe Cycling Education Program**

■ **Other Key References for Regional Cycling Programs include:**

- Ontario Guide to Safe Cycling
- Be Seen – Be Safe – Cycle Smart Program
- The Going Somewhere? Go Cycling! Program
- Bike to Work Day
- Car Free Day
- A Fresh Air Festival on Wheels – Tour de Greenbelt
- Bike’n’Bus



## 2.0 EVALUATION APPROACH

A preliminary set of route selection criteria was developed and reviewed by the study team, local stakeholders as well as members of the public. The criteria were developed to help inform the development of the proposed cycling route and walking trail and will ultimately be used as a guide for the future development and design of the Lake to Lake Route network.

The first step provides high-level regional route selection criteria which reflect the overall goals and objectives of the projects.

Following the high-level criteria are two sets of criteria which assess the route’s “User Experience” and “Safety and Design Feasibility”. These criteria are more detailed and are to be used to refine the routes and ultimately identify the preferred alternative as well as more detailed route alignment and design. The following figure, **Figure 2.1**, illustrates the process which is proposed to be used when selecting the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail.

In addition to the route selection process, the study team has also developed a detailed description for each of the criteria. These criteria have been developed based on current best practices and guidelines for cycling and walking routes of a similar scope and scale. The detailed criteria listed in the chart below should be used to guide the assessment of the route against the individual criteria. They are intended to be used to confirm the preferred route as well as the future development of additional Lake to Lake Route detailed design and alignment.



**Figure 2.1 – Lake to Lake Route Selection Process**

Category	Subcategory	Description and Considerations
<b>High-Level Regional Route Selection Criteria</b>		
A.	Provides linkages to features of natural and culture significance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The route provides good access to a number of key features of natural significance throughout the Region (e.g. lakes, conservation areas, and major tourist destinations). Corridors that provide strong, good and / or many connections to these key geographic features would receive a higher score; and</li> <li>■ The route provides access to key or major culture features / locations throughout the Region. Corridors that provide strong, good and/or many connections to these key geographic features would receive a higher score.</li> </ul>
B.	Is a practical part of a spine network which links Lake Ontario to Lake Simcoe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The route provides cyclists with a logical connection from Lake Simcoe through York Region and the City of Toronto to Lake Ontario; and</li> <li>■ Where possible, the route builds on the route goals and objectives outlined by the Region and its local municipalities.</li> </ul>
C.	Builds upon established Regional and Local Municipal Cycling Route and Walking Trails.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The route builds upon existing cycling routes and walking trails where possible. Proposed routes that follow and / or connect to already existing cycling routes and walking trails would be scored higher; and</li> <li>■ Those routes that are thought to provide a high potential for Cycling and Walking Tourism and provides both long and short distance cyclists and hikers with touring options would receive a higher score.</li> </ul>



Category	Subcategory	Description and Considerations
<b>User Experience</b>		
<b>Desirable</b>	1. Scenic and Attractive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The route provides direct access to or is in close proximity to natural areas and bodies of water;</li> <li>■ The route provides cyclists and pedestrians with rest areas and stopping areas with shade available; and</li> <li>■ Provides direct access to key natural features and destinations throughout the Region including but not limited to vistas and views from trails / routes, visual points of interest, areas for high quality photo opportunities and areas with significant cultural / historical landscapes and views.</li> </ul>
	2. Demonstrates Existing and / or Future Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The route utilizes established and successful routes and is popular among cyclists and pedestrians;</li> <li>■ The route includes corridors with high potential for cycle and walking tourism, such as abandoned railroads and roads where shoulders can be paved; and</li> <li>■ The route has been identified by cyclists and pedestrians as an important future and / or existing connection and there have been requests by local cyclists and pedestrians and / or stakeholders for the addition of facilities to improve the connection. A large number of requests indicate a higher demand for the connection.</li> </ul>
	3. Perception of Safety and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The route provides the user with a sense of safety including access to emergency response providers, route lighting, informational signage, the presence of a designated cycling facility and access to key cycling and pedestrian amenities. A large number of features indicates a high perception of safety; and</li> <li>■ Routes with lower motor vehicle volumes are perceived to provide a higher sense of safety than routes with higher vehicle volumes and thus would receive a higher rating.</li> </ul>

Category	Subcategory	Description and Considerations
Desirable Cont'd.	4. Level of Comfort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The route should have a surface which provides riders and pedestrians with a higher sense of comfort while using the route (e.g. paved or granular surface). The presence of a paved facility indicates a higher level of comfort while facilities made of hard-packed earth indicate a lower level of comfort; and</li> <li>The route is designed at a width that is both safe and comfortable to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Paved shoulders should be a minimum of 1.2 m, one way pathways should be designed at a minimum width of 2.0 m and two way pathways should be designed at a minimum of 3.0 m.</li> </ul>
	5. Topography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where vertical alignment is extreme cyclists and pedestrians with less experience or lower fitness levels may be discouraged from using the route; and</li> <li>Routes that have frequent or significant grades indicate a lower ranking level whereas routes with minimal grade variations indicates a higher ranking.</li> </ul>
	6. Consistent with Local Tourism Strategies and Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The route supports the strategies and goals identified by Regional Tourism Offices and / or major local tourism organizations and is identified as a key route as part of these strategies. If the route is identified in a regional strategy it will receive a higher ranking.</li> </ul>
Connected	7. Links Significant Destinations and Attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes primarily destinations of a Regional significance e.g. Major bodies of water, Conservation Areas etc. but may also include important local destinations and attractions e.g. Local Community Centres, Schools, Historical Sites, Conservation Areas etc.</li> </ul>
	8. Connects Significant Population Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant can refer to population as well as the significance of the centre in the regional context (i.e. main town in a rural regional area).</li> </ul>



Category	Subcategory	Description and Considerations
Connected Cont'd.	9. Access to Services and Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The route provides access to services and amenities and the spacing of amenities at appropriate intervals (e.g. 20-30 km) for cyclists travel. Daily needs include food, water, camping / rooming, washrooms; and</li> <li>■ Provides access to services that are sensitive to the needs of cyclists and pedestrians e.g. bike shops, accommodation and restaurants that are recognized by the Welcome Cyclists Program.</li> </ul>
	10. Provides Intermodal Linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The route connects cyclists and pedestrians to transportation hubs (regional / local bus, ferries, rail etc.), with regularly scheduled arrival and departure times; and</li> <li>■ Where intermodal links are seasonal only, an alternate route should be provided in the off-season where possible.</li> </ul>
Logical	11. Easy to Follow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The route has limited turns and is easy to follow;</li> <li>■ Lengthy unnecessary detours are avoided;</li> <li>■ The route is well marked and / or has easily recognizable permanent landmarks (natural or man-made); and</li> <li>■ Maps for existing routes are available to the public.</li> </ul>
	12. Crosses Major Physical Barrier(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Route provides logical and appropriate crossings of major physical barriers such as railways, major highways, lakes and rivers; and</li> <li>■ Facilities to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians across barriers already exist or can be provided.</li> </ul>
	13. Meets User Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Route location and facility respond to type and skill level of anticipated users. For example, the development of a link between a Conservation Area and nearby urban centre may be best accomplished with a multi-use pathway to accommodate less experienced, youth cyclists and families; and</li> <li>■ Provides access to existing and/or potential staging and parking areas, making the route attractive also to users who prefer to travel shorter distances.</li> </ul>

Category	Subcategory	Description and Considerations
<b>Safety and Feasibility Criteria</b>		
<b>Route Characteristics &amp; Safety Considerations</b>	14. Motor Vehicle Traffic Volumes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lower motor vehicle volumes are more suitable / conducive to on-road cycling, and would receive a higher rating than routes with higher motor vehicle traffic volumes;</li> <li>■ Higher motor vehicle traffic volumes can accommodate on-road cycling where vehicle speeds are low (e.g. along main streets in urban centres); and</li> <li>■ When motor vehicle traffic volumes exceed threshold levels then cycling facilities should be separated from motor vehicle traffic or an alternate route (parallel or nearby) should be sought. Threshold levels vary according to motor vehicle operating speed whereby volume thresholds are lower where operating speeds are higher.</li> </ul>
	15. Motor Vehicle Operating Speeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lower motor vehicle operating speeds are more suitable/conducive to on-road cycling, and would receive a higher rating than routes with higher vehicle operating speeds; and</li> <li>■ When motor vehicle operating speeds exceed threshold levels then cycling facilities should be separated from motor vehicle traffic where no alternate route (parallel or nearby) is available. Threshold levels vary according to motor vehicle operating speed whereby volume thresholds are lower where operating speeds are higher</li> </ul>
	16. Truck and Commercial Vehicle Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Routes with lower truck and commercial vehicle percentages are more conducive / suitable for on-road cycling, and would receive a higher rating;</li> <li>■ As truck and commercial vehicle percentages increase consideration needs to be given to wider cycling facilities to provide greater separation between trucks and cyclists; and</li> <li>■ Once truck and commercial vehicles exceed threshold levels (10-12%) consideration should be given to separating the facility from the motor vehicle route (e.g. cycle-track, active transportation path within the right-of-way or an alternate route (parallel or nearby) should be sought.</li> </ul>



Category	Subcategory	Description and Considerations
Route Selection & Safety Considerations Cont'd.	17. Sightlines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consideration needs to be given to both horizontal and vertical alignment of the roadway as part of evaluating sightlines. Variety in horizontal and vertical alignment can add to the scenic quality and interest/attractiveness to a cycling or pedestrian route. However, when this is combined with narrow pavement width and limited opportunity to add width, or where deep roadside ditches are present then cyclists' or pedestrians' comfort level decreases. This becomes more of an issue where motor vehicle traffic volumes are higher.</li> </ul>
	18. Emergency Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Routes that are in locations where there is easy access by Emergency Service personnel (e.g. close to urban centres, on main roads etc.) would receive a higher rating than routes in more remote areas (back roads);</li> <li>■ Routes that provide users with additional emergency technologies and reference information (e.g. Quick Response (QR), GPS Coordinates and codes on information signs, key contact information on signage, distance of trailhead or key destination etc.) would receive a higher rating; and</li> <li>■ Where routes are off-road and outside of the road right-of-way then access by Emergency Service personnel is typically more challenging. In these cases, the route would receive a lower rating.</li> </ul>
	19. Collision History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Routes that are proposed in a location where collision information and history is available will be assessed based on this data. Should the proposed corridor have a significant number of collisions (motor vehicle, cyclist or pedestrians) it would receive a lower rating than routes on corridors which indicate fewer collisions.</li> </ul>
Design Feasibility & Maintenance	20. Makes the Best Use of Existing Area Cycling and Walking Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The route follows and should be aligned to make the best use of the existing facilities where appropriate.</li> </ul>

Category	Subcategory	Description and Considerations
<b>Design Feasibility &amp; Maintenance Cont'd.</b>	21. Appropriateness of Facility Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There is sufficient space to develop a cycling or pedestrian facility where one has not been constructed yet, regardless of whether or not it is part of an approved Master Plan; and</li> <li>■ The facility type is consistent with the road features (e.g. If the operating speed on the road is 80 km/h + with high traffic volumes it is recommended that separated cycling or pedestrian facilities be implemented.</li> </ul>
	22. Local Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There is a demonstrated commitment at the local / regional level to providing cycling or pedestrian facilities in that location. Demonstration of commitment may be defined as (in order of importance):</li> <li>■ Existing facilities already in place along some parts of the route (completing the connection closes gaps / completes missing links along an existing route or connects two established cycling or pedestrian routes / loops);</li> <li>■ A route that is an approved master plan and the design of the facilities is complete and funding has been allocated;</li> <li>■ The route is in an approved master plan and the design has already been completed but funding is not yet in place;</li> <li>■ A route is in an approved master plan with neither the design completed nor the funding in place; and</li> <li>■ The route is not part of an approved master plan.</li> </ul>
	23. Benefits vs. Investment Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A cycling or pedestrian facility can be implemented at a reasonable cost without unnecessarily compromising cyclist or pedestrian safety;</li> <li>■ Overall, the benefits associated with implementing the proposed cycling or pedestrian facility justifies the cost; and</li> <li>■ If funding is currently available for implementing cycling or pedestrian facilities, the required design makes efficient use of available funding.</li> </ul>



Category	Subcategory	Description and Considerations
Design Feasibility & Maintenance Cont'd.	24. Operations and Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The route is well maintained to ensure that surfaces are considered rideable or useable and safe by cyclists and pedestrians. Maintenance agreements that are already in place indicates a higher operational / maintenance ranking; and</li> <li>■ The route can be found within a region or local municipalities which have developed a trail or cycling facility maintenance strategy or agreement pertaining to operations and maintenance of the facility. Those routes which would have an agreement within their jurisdiction would have a higher ranking.</li> </ul>

## 3.0 RATIONALE FOR PREFERRED ROUTE

### 3.1 Introduction

Identifying and developing the preferred Lake to Lake Route involved a number of steps and detailed consideration of the route selection criteria described in Section 2.0. Key steps in this process included:

1. Compiling and assembling background data from the Region and local municipalities, including digital and hard copy networks from master active transportation and trails master plans;
2. Mapping key destinations and barriers;
3. Consulting with the project steering committee and stakeholders;
4. Gathering information / input on routes from members of the public who responded to the on-line questionnaire as well as those who provided comments related to the route at the public open houses on June 1 and 3, 2012, November 16 and 16, 2012 and February 12, 2013;
5. Conducting a first round of field investigations to scope out the route alternatives and evaluate some of the options in key areas;
6. Identifying route alternatives; and
7. Evaluating route alternatives using the selection criteria and recommend a preliminary preferred route along with alternate loops or routes where required.

The key selection criteria which were primarily used to define the proposed route include:

- Link existing pathway and cycling networks and examine options to develop a route that is off-road wherever possible so that it appeals to the widest range of user skill and confidence levels;
- Connect important community destinations and tourist attractions;
- Provide connections to intermodal hubs;
- Provide access to area and services needed by route users (e.g. food, lodging, washrooms, equipment parts and repair etc.);

- Overcome / cross major barriers including major highways and major roads, rivers, and railways);
- Develop a spine that is located nearby the largest population areas and create opportunities for local municipal and neighbourhood routes to link with the spine Lake to Lake Route
- Take advantage of scenic views and vistas where they exist; and
- Provide a meaningful user experience.

## 3.2 Route Rationale by Section

The preliminary preferred route is illustrated in **Maps 5.1** through **5.6**. Various sections of the route including the primary and secondary alternatives are presented in detail below. The sections have been organized by municipality in the following order:

- Town of Georgina;
- Town of East Gwillimbury;
- Town of Newmarket, Aurora and Whitchurch-Stouffville;
- Town of Richmond Hill; and
- City of Markham.

### Section 1: Georgina

#### Main Route

- The majority of the route in Georgina is on-street, following quieter residential streets which hug the shoreline of Cooks Bay and the south shore of Lake Simcoe.
- Sibbald Point Provincial Park is a major destination on the shore of Lake Simcoe and is the logical starting or ending point. The Park includes a variety of facilities that users require including washrooms, camping, parking and interpretive facilities and other related amenities.
- West on Park Road, Hedge Road along the waterfront where there are exceptional views over the lake. Although the road is relatively narrow and winds its way along the shoreline, vehicular traffic moves slowly. In addition to a number of public parks and beaches which provide waterfront access, the route has a unique sense of scale due in part to the architectural variety of the cottages and homes and extensive mature trees lining the road.
- The waterfront route links a number of the old cottage communities including Jacksons Point, Willow Beach, Paradise Beach, Eastbourne, Brighton Beach, Roches Point, Orchard Grove, Keswick, Elmhurst Beach and Miami Beach.
- In this first section on the south shore of Lake Simcoe Metro Road lies immediately south of Lake Drive East. It includes a paved shoulder in some sections and provides ample space for cyclists in large groups or wanting to travel at higher speeds.
- West on Lake Drive north (immediately adjacent to Metro Road North) into Brighton Beach, along Osborn Street, Bouchier Street, Pine Post Road, then onto Lake Drive North into Orchard Grove
- South on Shoreline Place connecting to Metropolitan Crescent, and to Cook's Bay Drive.



- South on Metro Road South, The Queensway which includes an existing boulevard multi-use path, over the Maskinonge River, as well as direct access to a number of the commercial services and establishments in Keswick.
- West on Bayview Avenue, to Lake Drive South through Elmhurst Beach and Pine Beach and Miami Beach and Youngs Harbour.
- East on Ravenshoe Road to Leslie Street, then south on Leslie Street utilizing future paved shoulders to the Boag Road allowance.

### **Alternates**

- a) The East Loop, which includes Black River Road with existing paved shoulders into Sutton, Dalton Road or multi-use pathway parallel to Dalton Road (in behind Peter Gzowski Library Branch), Catering Road to the Sutton-Zephyr Rail Trail, and south on the rail trail into East Gwillimbury. In addition to utilizing this major off-road trail, the East Loop also provides a direct connection to pathway networks in a number of the York Regional Forest Management areas.
- b) In Keswick, Metro Road South to Pollock Road as an alternate to local streets Shoreline Place, Metropolitan Crescent, and Cooks Bay Road.
- c) The Queensway from Bayview Avenue to Ravenshoe Road is a potential alternate to Lake Drive South and provides direct access to local commercial services, as well it may be a more direct route for the experienced cyclist. However, it is a busier commercial road that may not appeal to less experienced cyclists.
- d) Ravenshoe Road west from Lake Drive South to the road allowance for 2<sup>nd</sup> Concession Road. Preliminary field investigations suggest that 2<sup>nd</sup> Concession Road allowance south of Ravenshoe Road may be a significant challenge for implementation as it is surrounded by active agriculture, some or all sections of the right-of-way may currently be farmed and further field investigation is needed. This link provides opportunities for interpretation of agricultural practices, but the potential benefit may be outweighed by the point of view of the adjacent landowners/farmers (e.g. concerns regarding safe agriculture activities such as spraying, and moving equipment as well as potential trespass onto croplands by pathway users).

## **Section 2: East Gwillimbury**

### **Main Route**

- West on Ravenshoe Road to Leslie Street utilizing future paved shoulders on Leslie Street to the Boag Road allowance.
- West on the Boag Road allowance to 2<sup>nd</sup> Concession allowance, to the Holborn Road allowance, to Yonge Street. Preliminary investigations suggest that several portions of the Holborn Road, 2<sup>nd</sup> Concession and Boag Road allowances may require an elevated pathway or boardwalk, further detailed site investigations are required.

- South on Yonge Street from Queensville Sideroad to Doane Road.
- Off road from Doane Road to Bradford Street.
- South on Bradford Street to Holland Landing Road.
- On-road on Holland Landing Road to Yonge Street.
- Off-road from Yonge Street to 2<sup>nd</sup> Concession Road using existing off-road sections of the Nokiidaa Trail.
- South on the Nokiidaa Trail through Rogers Reservoir to the Tom Taylor Trail east of Concession Road 2, past the East Gwillimbury GO Station.

### Alternates

- a) The East loop; Sutton-Zephyr Rail Trail south to Holborn Road, Holborn Road to McCowan Road, McCowan Road south to Davis Drive.
- b) South on Leslie Street from Boag Road to Queensville Sideroad.
- c) East on Queensville Sideroad from Yonge Street to McCowan Road.
- d) Off-road from Queensville Sideroad south to Doane Road.
- e) South along the network of local existing and planned pathways behind Holland River Boulevard to Mount Albert Road, connecting with the Nokiidaa Trail along the Holland River.

### Section 3: Newmarket, Aurora, Stouffville

#### Main Route

- South on the Tom Taylor Trail crossing below Green Lane through George Richardson Park to downtown Newmarket, past Fairy Lake, crossing below Mulock Drive, south to make the connection into Aurora using the McKenzie Marsh Pathway and existing in-boulevard active transportation path along St. John's Sideroad.
- Nokiidaa Trail in the valley lands between Industrial Parkway and Birkshire Drive.
- South on the existing pathway below John West Way to the intersection of John West Way and Wellington Street.
- East along the Wellington Street right-of-way using the existing in-boulevard active transportation path on the south side of the street to the existing pathway system through Sheppard's Bush.
- South on the existing pathway in valley lands between Deerglen Terrace and Englehard Drive, past the junction of the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail to Vandorf Sideroad.
- South of Vandorf Sideroad along the existing pathway over Crossing Bridge Place and in the valley lands west of Benville Crescent to Bayview Avenue near Beacon Hall Road.
- South along Bayview Avenue, within the road right-of-way to Bloomingdale Road.



## Alternates

- a) East loop; McCowan Road south to St. John's Sideroad, then west on St. John's Sideroad to the intersection with the Nokiidaa Trail intersection near Industrial Parkway.

## Section 4: Richmond Hill

### Main Route

- South along Bayview Avenue within the road right-of-way to Bayview Court South, Sunbay Court, Olde Bayview Avenue and Sunset Beach Road past the new Oak Ridges Community Centre at Lake Wilcox. Note that trail development plans by the TRCA in this area envision a major trail and interpretive centre.
- South on Bayview Park Lane and crossing over to the east side of Bayview Avenue at the signalized intersection, then connecting with planned pathways in the Oak Ridges Corridor Nature Reserve lands (TRCA), following the main / primary planned pathway out to Bayview Avenue north of Stouffville Sideroad.
- South along Bayview Avenue via a new in-boulevard active transportation path on the east side of the road to 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- East along 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue using a new in-boulevard active transportation path along the south side of the road to connect with a new spine pathway being planned as part of a new community development south of 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue (North Leslie Lands), to Leslie Street.
- South along Leslie Street using a future in-boulevard active transportation path by Richmond Green Sports Centre and Park.
- South along the west side of Leslie to Major Mackenzie Drive using a future in-boulevard active transportation path.
- West along Major Mackenzie Drive using a future in-boulevard active transportation path to the existing pathway heading south from Major Mackenzie Drive in the valley between Boake Trail and Crescentview Road.
- South on this path until the intersection with Boake Trail, then south on Dewborne Avenue to the signalized intersection at 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Following the existing pathway south of 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue to David Hamilton Park, then south on Blackmore Road to Briggs Avenue.
- West along Briggs Avenue to Bayview, then south along the west side of Bayview for approximately 250 m along a future In-boulevard Active Transportation Path to the intersection with the existing pathway in valley land between Bayview Avenue and Castleridge Drive, then south to the intersection of this pathway with Regional Road / Highway 7.
- East along Regional Road / Highway 7 using a future in-boulevard active transportation path to the signalized intersection with South Park Road.

## Alternates

- a) East along a future multi-use pathway through a future new neighbourhood on the west side of Leslie Street and south of Bethesda Sideroad, or south along Leslie Street using an future in-boulevard active transportation path on the west side of Leslie Street, past Phyllis Rawlinson Park, south to Richmond Green Sports Centre and Park.
- b) South from the main pathway in the TRCA lands at Stouffville Road utilizing future secondary pathways to Stouffville Road then south along ravine lands or Provence Court to link with potential multi-use pathways in a future neighbourhood on the south side of the railway. This alternate requires additional investigation to determine the feasibility of using secondary pathways in the TRCA property, the ability to develop a safe crossing of a hilly section of Stouffville Road, and the feasibility to cross the railway. Initial investigations suggest that crossing below the track may not be possible so a pedestrian bridge may be required.
- c) West on Elgin Mills Road using a new in-boulevard active transportation path along the north side of the road to Melbourne Drive, then west to connect with the existing pathway in valley lands between Shoshana Drive and Melbourne Drive, then along Princeton Avenue to Leslie Street.
- d) South on Leslie Street from Major Mackenzie Drive to the Richmond Hill-Markham boundary at Regional Road / Highway 7.

## Section 5: Markham

### Main Route

- South along South Park Road to a future multi-use pathway connection through the new development block, west to a crossing below Highway 407 at German Mills Creek.
- Connecting with the existing hydro corridor pathway, then east on this pathway through Huntington and Livingston Park to Huntington Park Drive.
- South on Huntington Park Drive, west on Green Lane, east on Bronte Road to Tanglewood Drive, east on Tanglewood Drive to Leslie Street.
- South on Leslie Street to John Street using a future in-boulevard active transportation path.
- West on John Street to the German Mills Trail using a future in-boulevard active transportation path on the South side of John Street.
- South along the German Mills Trail to Leslie Street.
- South along Leslie Street to the intersection with Steeles Avenue at the City of Toronto municipal boundary and approximately 150 m north of the Don Valley Trail and East Don Trail.

### Alternates

- a) East on South Park Drive to Commerce Valley Drive West to Leslie or south on Leslie using a future in-boulevard active transportation path on the west side of Leslie, over Highway 407, then south to John Street.



- b) South from the existing Hydro Corridor pathway following a new multi-use pathway following German Mills Creek to Green Lane (area requires more detailed investigation to determine feasibility of this alternate.
- c) East along the existing hydro corridor pathway from Livingston Park to Leslie Street.

### **3.3 Next Steps**

The following next steps will be undertaken as a part of the second phase of the project:

- Undertake additional field investigations and evaluation of the main route and alternate links as part of the development of the detailed feasibility assessment for the main Lake to Lake Route;
- Recommend appropriate facility types and identify implementation costs; and
- Develop prioritization criteria and apply these to the entire route as part of the implementation planning phase of the project.

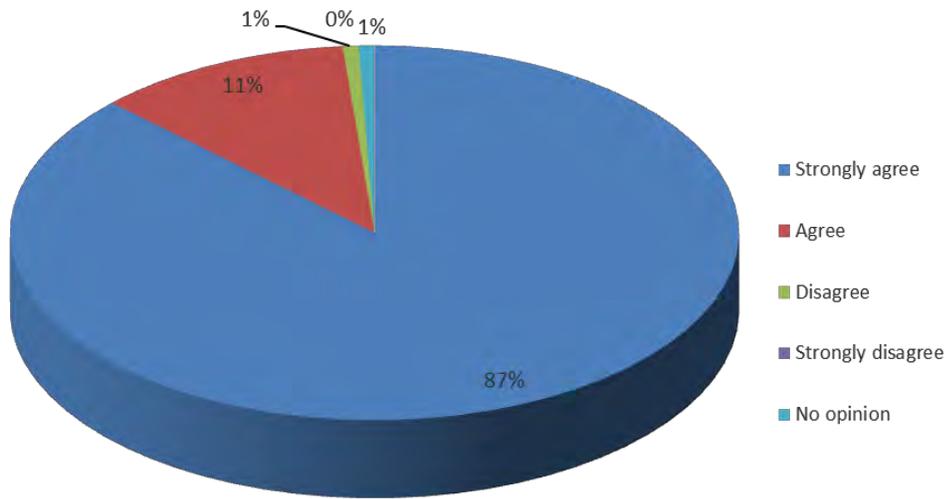
## **4.0 PUBLIC INPUT & STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION**

Phase 1 of the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail Design Study commenced with a detailed consultation strategy. The goal of the strategy was to engage members of the public as well as local stakeholders through a number of consultation events / venues. The different ways in which the public and stakeholders were engaged as well as the comments and input received is documented below.

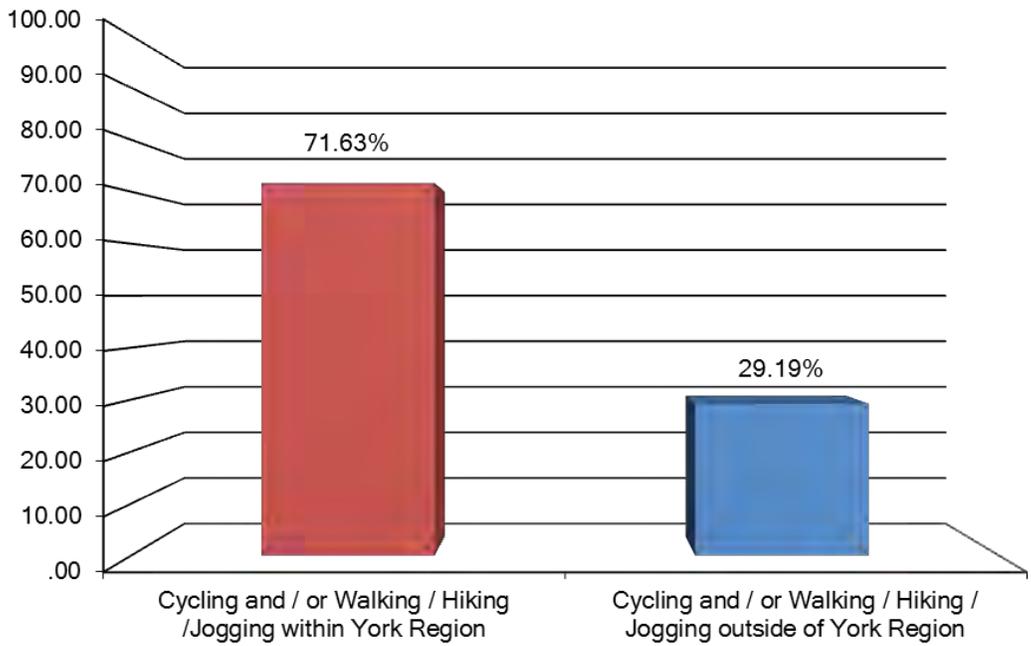
### **4.1 Online Questionnaire Results**

As part of the study, a web-based questionnaire was developed and hosted using the online tool SurveyMonkey ([www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)). The questionnaire was posted in February 2012 and as of February 2013 there were 147 results to the questionnaire. The questionnaire, although not statistically valid, provides the study team with useful information and input regarding the development and refinement of a Lake to Lake Route and design alternatives as well as potential branding and outreach opportunities to help promote the future use of the route. The questionnaire was made accessible to residents and stakeholders in hard copy by request, was posted on York Region's study webpage ([www.yorkcycling.ca](http://www.yorkcycling.ca)). The following is a summary of the key findings from the questionnaire based on the 147 responses provided as of February 2013.

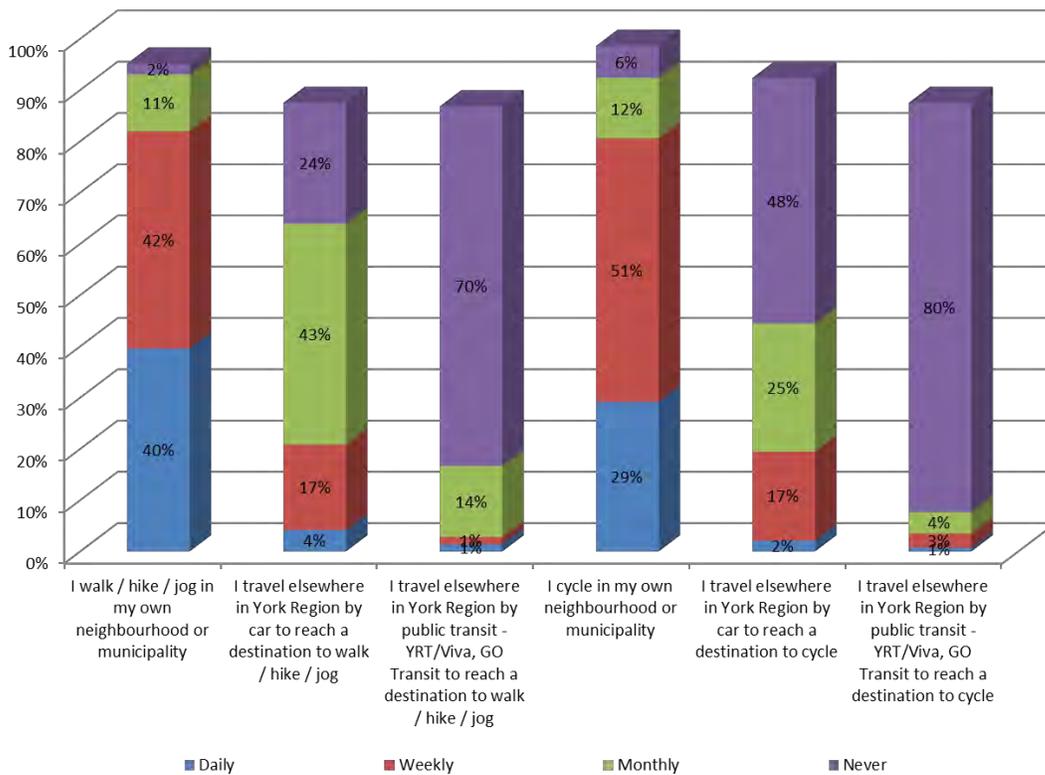
**Key Finding:** It is important to note that 98% of respondents either strongly agree or agree with the development of a Lake to Lake Cycling Route.



In order to gain a better understanding of the type of active transportation related activities being undertaken and where they are taking place the questionnaire asked respondents to approximate how much time was spent walking or cycling in York Region vs. outside of York Region. 142 respondents provided an answer to this question and of these responses the following was the average.

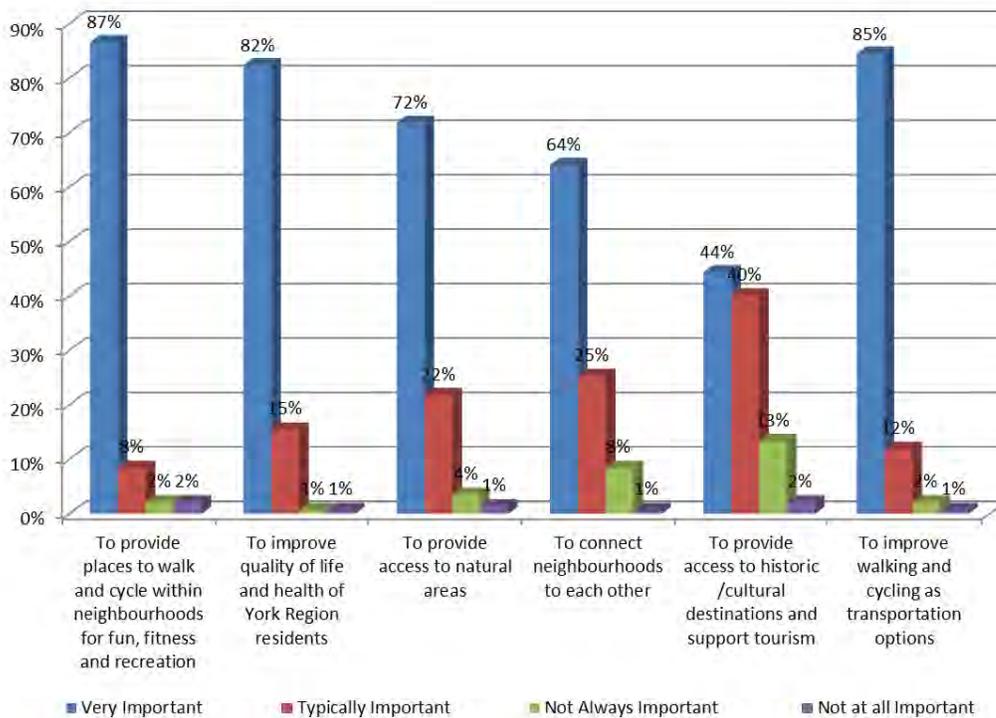


**Key Finding:** Responses indicate that most users stay within the Region to walk or cycle with fewer venturing outside. This is important to note as it may indicate a demand for additional cycling and walking routes for residents.



**Question:** Please indicate how often you participate in the following recreational activities:

**Key Finding:** A number of the respondents noted that their typical area for daily or weekly walking and cycling activities is within their own neighbourhoods. In addition, responses indicate that it is rare that respondents would travel using public transit to walk or cycle throughout the Region.

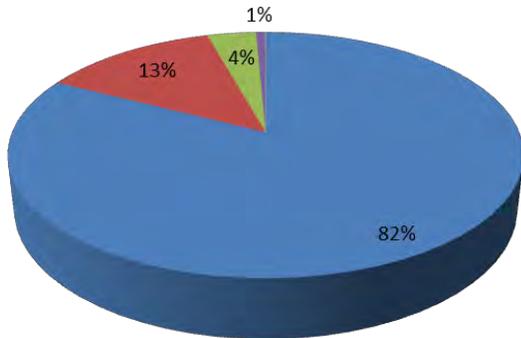


**Question:** Please indicate the level of importance you would assign to why the Region should develop the Route.

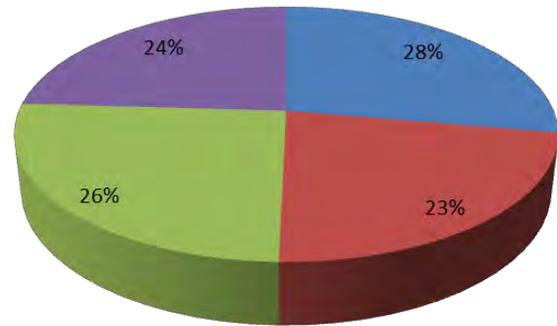
**Key Finding:** Respondents have identified places to walk and cycle, the improvement of quality of life and health and improve walking and cycling as transportation options as very important for the development of the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail.

In order to gauge a better understanding of the types of walking and cycling facilities that the public would wish to include as part of a Lake to Lake Cycling Route, the study team asked respondents to indicate their level of comfort with specific facility types. The responses provided have been summarized by facility type to indicate the level of perceived comfort for each:

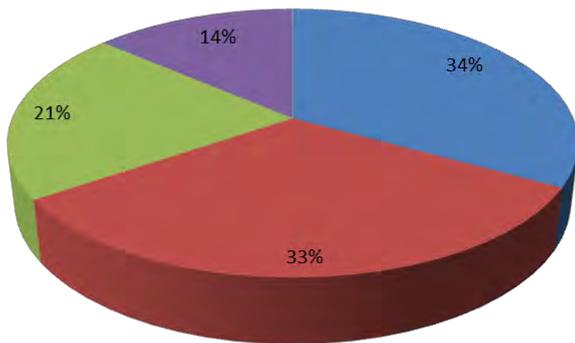
**Walking / Hiking on Off-Road Multi-use Trails**



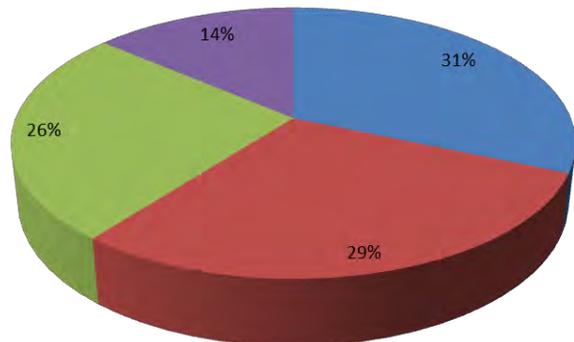
**Walking / Hiking on Paved or Gravel Roadway**



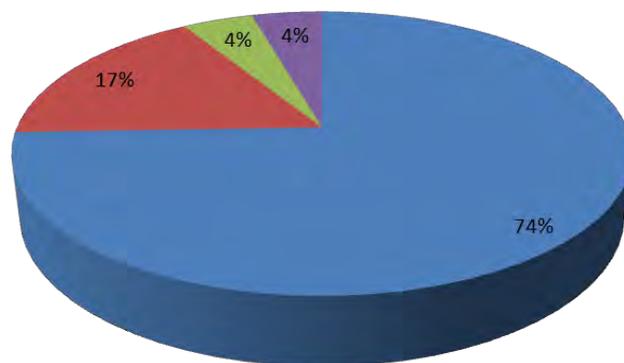
**Cycling on Roads with Bike Lanes or Paved Shoulders**



**Cycling on Low Volume Roads with no Bike Lanes or Paved Shoulders**



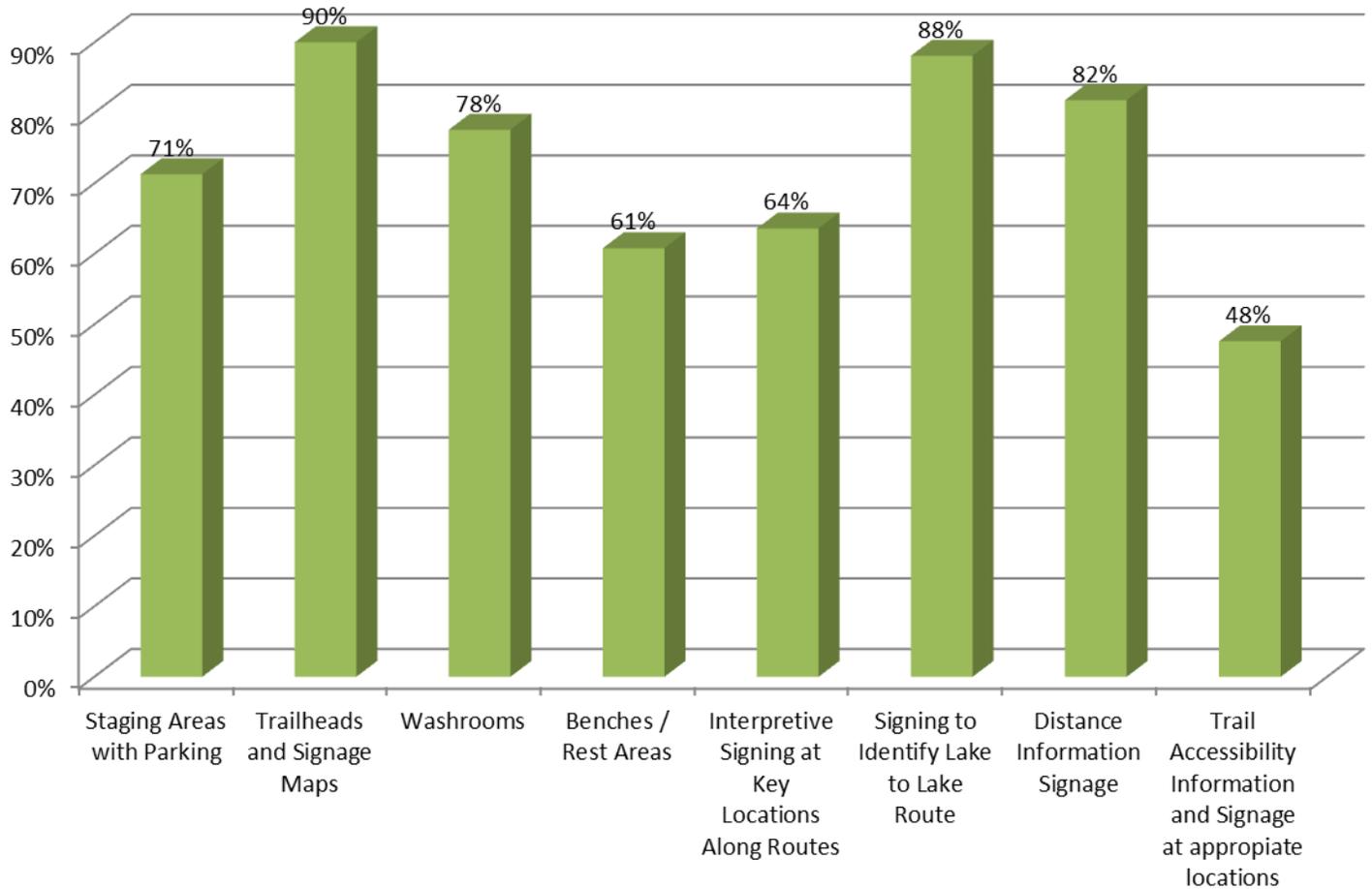
**Cycling on Off-Road Multi-use Trails**



■ 1. Most Comfortable ■ 2. Typically Comfortable ■ 3. Not always comfortable ■ 4. Least comfortable



Lastly, the study team felt that it would be important to ask respondents about the type of information / features that they would prefer on the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail. The following illustrates the responses provided which indicate a level of importance hierarchy for potential amenities and features which could be explored for implementation along the route:



**Key Finding:** Responses indicate a strong demand for trailheads and signage. One of the key tasks for the study is a proposed signage and branding concept which will build upon these recommendations.

## 4.2 Stakeholder Workshop & Study Tour

In the initial stages of Phase 1, York Region, working collaboratively with MMM Group, the Tourism Company and Alta Planning & Design, conducted a workshop to gather input from stakeholders as well as representatives from the study's technical advisory committee. The workshop engaged representatives from the Region, many of the Region's local municipalities (all were invited), the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority, the Toronto & Region Conservation Authority, the Simcoe County, York Regional Police and the York Region District School Board.

The workshop was held on April 27th, 2012, the session provided participants with information on emerging trends in trail design, branding, marketing and policy development. The session also facilitated discussion regarding the development of a potential Lake to Lake Route as originally identified in the Region's Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (2008). The goal of the workshop was to collect opinions, comments and recommendations with regard to the expansion of existing cycling routes and walking trails from Lake Ontario through the City of Toronto into York Region to Lake Simcoe.

Meeting attendees were provided with a number of materials including:

- A copy of the workshop agenda;
- A copy of the Notice of Study Commencement;
- A Background Information Memo which provided attendees with information on the study as well as the goal and intent of the workshop. In addition, a draft set of route selection criteria was developed and included.
- A first draft of the Volume 1 Working Paper including a summary of key policies and plans which will influence the development of the Lake to lake Route;
- Workshop presentations on the following topics:
  - A Study Introduction & Overview – Dave McLaughlin & Yvonne Kaczor;
  - A Best Practices Overview: “Major Urban Trails: Lessons Learned” – Jeff Olson (Alta Planning & Design);



- An Overview of Trail Branding and Tourism Benefits Associated with Trail Investment – D’Arcy McKittrick (the Tourism Company);
- An Overview of the Primary Corridor, Key Destinations & Attractions & Route Selection Criteria – Jay Cranstone (MMM Group); and
- An Overview of Trail Design Guidelines & Facility Types – Jay Cranstone (MMM Group).

- **Mapping of the Primary Corridor by municipality.**

The information presented was used to inform attendees, as they helped to identify opportunities and challenges of a potential Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail. The materials have been consolidated and are included in **Appendix A** of Volume 1.

Following the presentations, participants were asked to separate into working groups (as previously determined by the study team) to review the mapping of a recommended and alternative route for the Lake to Lake Route by municipality. The mapping was broken into 5 sections including:

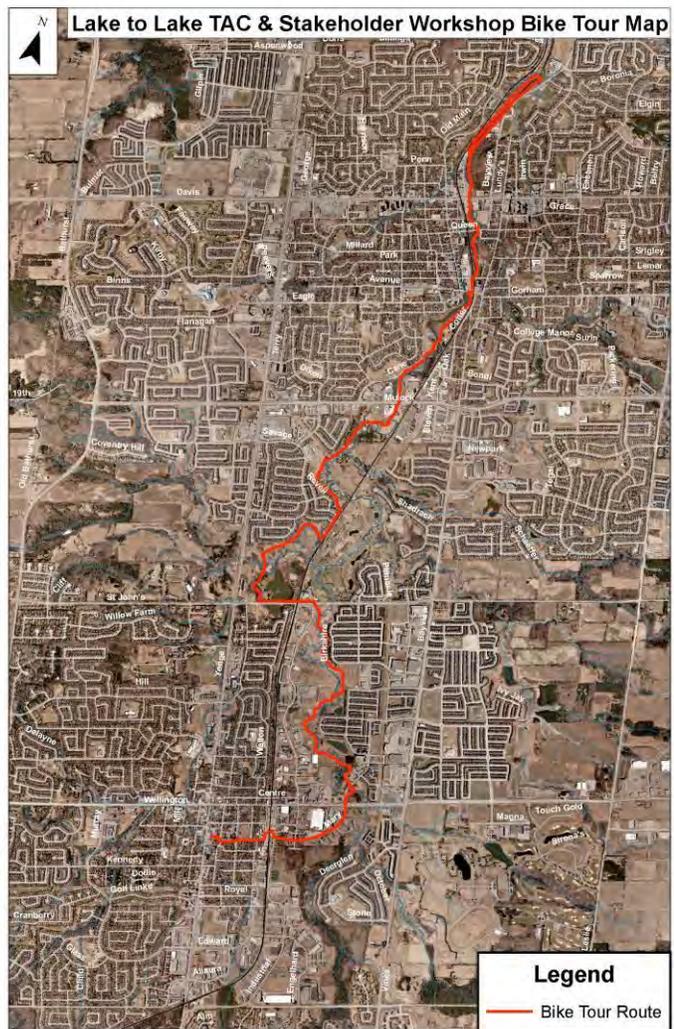
- Town of Georgina
- Town of East Gwillimbury;
- Town of Newmarket, Town of Aurora and Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville;
- Town of Richmond Hill; and
- City of Markham.

For each of the segments, attendees were provided with 6 questions and were asked to address as many of the questions as possible within the timeframe available. The questions were:

1. What are your thoughts on the proposed Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail alignment?
2. What are some potential opportunities and constraints with this trail alignment?
3. Identify some key destinations and points of interest that you think the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail should connect with?
4. The current design concept envisions that the trail may include some of the following facility types:
  - a. off-road multi-use trails,
  - b. in-boulevard multi-use trails in place of an existing sidewalk or adjacent to sidewalks,
  - c. bike lanes and sidewalk on urban cross-section roads, and
  - d. paved shoulders and signed-only routes on rural cross-section roads.
5. Do you have any comments on the use of some or all of these facility types?
6. What kind of branding or marketing strategies should be explored to help best promote a Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail?

Attendees were allocated an hour to address the questions and were encouraged to provide their comments directly on the maps including comments regarding missing links, considerations for route refinement, areas of opportunity or challenges, key destinations as well as any potential branding or marketing considerations for the proposed route.

Following the Working Group session, attendees were asked to present their findings / comments. Responses from the questions posed as well as the comments received from the meeting attendees have been summarized in the following sections of the document. As a final activity, attendees were invited to participate in a study tour of a segment of the proposed Lake to Lake Cycling Route. A group of approximately 10 people participated. The map to the right illustrates the route which was taken by the group.



## **Topic 1.0    Comments on the proposed Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail alignment**

Participants were asked to answer the following question for the 5 segments of the proposed Lake to Lake Study:

***“What are your thoughts on the proposed Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail alignment?”***

From these responses, the following key themes were identified:

- The proposed route should be off-road wherever possible but still provide direct linkages and allow for active transportation / utilitarian uses, specifically in urban areas.
- The proposed route should provide safe and comfortable transportation and recreation and reduce the risks to cyclists.
- The proposed route should be attractive for cyclists and take advantage of the natural surroundings.
- The proposed route should connect to existing off-road and on-road facilities.
- The proposed route should be easily accessible for all towns and cities in the Regional Municipality of York.
- The proposed route should link larger areas of the Region and connect cyclists to cultural and historical elements.
- The development and location of the proposed route should be sustainable.

It is important to note that for the following questions the responses have been separated based on the segment of the route which was being discussed.

## **Topic 2.0    Identification of opportunities and constraints with proposed route (*Mapping Exercise*)**

This section of the workshop provides the participants’ input related to opportunities and constraints pertaining to the segment of the route which was being discussed. The following is a summary of the key highlights from this discussion:

### **Segment 1: Towns of Aurora, Newmarket, Stouffville**

#### ***Opportunities***

- Potential for route to connect to existing GO Rail lines.
- Links to commercial nodes for potential future development.

## Constraints

- The proposed route expands along an existing off-road facility which may cause congestion.

## Segment 2: City of Markham

### Opportunities

- There are many existing trails that future potential trails may connect with.
- Improved signage including interpretive signage (e.g. signage along German Mills Creek to highlight cultural and natural history).
- Development of themed route section to improve attractiveness (e.g. south at Leslie Street and Highway 407).
- Opportunity to develop improved transportation infrastructure, such as crossing signals.
- Opportunity of new trail development along river corridors.
- The proposed route should connect to the City of Toronto, south from Steeles Avenue.
- Opportunity to develop a boulevard trail along Leslie Street, between Highway 407 and 16th Avenue.

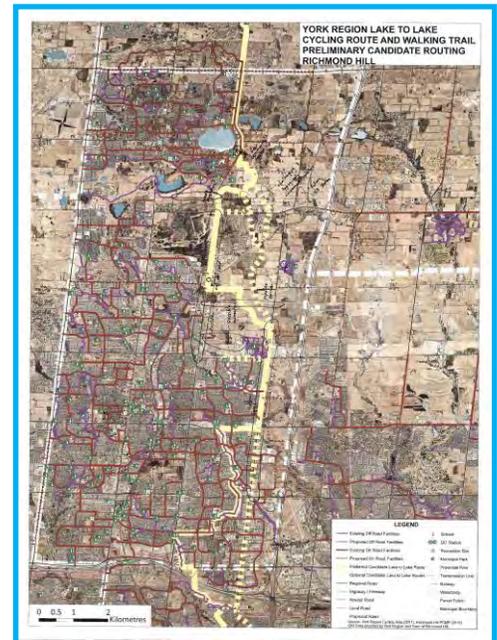
### Constraints

- Road space is limited providing challenges to develop a potential route (e.g. Leslie Street crossing of Highway 407).
- Reassign existing on-road space to dedicated space for cycling facilities.
- Fragmented sections of proposed routes need to be connected.
- Communities' preference to locate cycling facilities on residential roads despite increased accessibility from arterial roads.

## Segment 3: Town of Richmond Hill

### Opportunities

- Potential development of distinct routes to accommodate utilitarian cyclists and recreational cyclists.
- Opportunity for economic development near the Lake Wilcox area.
- Development of off-road networks (in boulevard) along the Leslie Corridor.



- Potential to develop east and west connections along the proposed route.

### Constraints

- Development of the proposed route may affect salamander habitats near the Lake Wilcox area.
- Preferred development of off-road facilities is challenged by limited land space.
- The development of multi-use pathways must balance varying users.
- Preference to develop multi-use pathways along the Leslie Corridor may be constrained by the 407.

## Segment 4: Town of East Gwillimbury

### Opportunities

- Potential to develop the proposed route along Leslie Street.
- Link the proposed route to cultural and historical elements of the community (e.g. Sharon Temple and Queensville Village).

### Constraints

- The proposed trail may take longer than ten years to build.
- Development of the proposed route may be challenged by the existence of the Holland Marsh.
- Land use challenges may constrain future development of proposed routes (e.g. along Provincial Highways).

## Segment 5: Town of Georgina

### Opportunities

- Link the proposed route to larger areas of the region by connecting cultural and historical elements (e.g. St. George Church).

### Constraints

- Participants did not provide input of potential constraints on the proposed route in this segment.

## Topic 3.0 Identification of points of interest along the proposed route (*Mapping Exercise*)

This section provides a summary of potential points of interest the proposed route should connect with which were addressed by attendees. This was a mapping exercise, whereby workshop participants provided



comments on a map of the proposed routes of the different segments. Comments on each segment map include:

### **Segment 1: Towns of Aurora, Newmarket, Stouffville**

- The proposed route should connect with commercial nodes, such as Upper Canada Mall.

### **Segment 2: Town of Richmond Hill**

- The proposed route should expand along Lake Wilcox.
- The proposed route should provide connections to Richmond Green.

### **Segment 3: City of Markham**

- The section of German Mills Creek should be linked to the proposed route to connect cyclists to cultural and historical elements.
- The proposed route should connect to Richmond Hill Centre and Langstaff Gateway.
- The proposed route should expand along the river corridors near John St and Leslie St.

### **Segment 4: Town of East Gwillimbury**

- The proposed route should link to the Sharon Temple.
- Expansion of the proposed route through Queensville village as it provides cyclists with elements of attractiveness.
- Potential connection to Nokiidaa Bike Trail.

### **Segment 5: Town of Georgina**

- St. George Church should be linked to the proposed route to connect cyclists with historical elements of the community.
- Jackson's Point should be connected to the proposed route as it links cyclists to a recreation and tourist destination.

## **Topic 4.0 Comments on the functionality of all facility types (Mapping Exercise)**

This section provides a summary of input regarding the use of several facility types on the proposed route. The current design may include off and on-road in-boulevard multi-use trails, bike lanes, paved shoulders and signed routes on rural roads and sidewalks on urban roads. Comments on the use of these facility types by segment area include:

### **Segment 1: Towns of Aurora, Newmarket, Stouffville**

- Participants did not provide comments of the functionality of facility types for this segment area.



### **Segment 2: Town of Richmond Hill**

- The facility should implement other surfaces rather than having an entire route paved.
- The facility must be safe and connected for cyclists accessing on-road routes.
- Multiuse pathways should be developed through specific areas to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians (e.g. Off-road trails along Leslie Corridor).
- Preferred off-road facilities rather than on-road facilities along high speed arterials.

### **Segment 3: City of Markham**

- The proposed route is preferred off-road.
- Existing off-road facilities, on-road facilities and proposed routes must be connected.
- Accessibility and visibility concerns of the proposed facility on urban roads with limited space (e.g. railway tracks and narrow bridges at Leslie Street and John Street).

### **Segment 4: Town of East Gwillimbury**

- The use of off-road facilities may be challenged by existing transmission line corridors.

### **Segment 5: Town of Georgina**

- Transition improvements needed between on-road facilities and off-road facilities (e.g. Ravenshoe Road and Highway 48).

## **Topic 5.0 & 6.0 Recommendation of Strategies and Programs in the future development of the Lake to Lake Route & Branding Alternatives**

Participants of the workshop focused primarily on the proposed route and facility types. There was limited discussion on the potential branding and / or marketing strategies which could be used. Although this topic did not receive much discussion at the workshop, it will be a focus in future phase of the study. The ideas presented by D'Arcy at the workshop will form the basis for future development of a Lake to Lake promotion and branding strategy.

### 4.3 Public Information Centre #1

Following the completion of Phase 1, the Study team undertook the first set of Public Information Centres (PICs). There were a total of two PICs held at strategic locations throughout the Region with the goal of targeting the widest range of responses and input. The PICs were held in June 2012. The specific dates and locations of the PICs are as follows:

**Friday June 1, 2012**

**3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

Hillcrest Mall

9350 Yonge Street, Richmond Hill, ON L4C 5G2

**Sunday June 3, 2012**

**11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.**

Aurora Street Festival

On both dates, representatives from the consultant team as well as the Region gathered to engage members of the public through informal “drop-in” sessions. These sessions were used to present initial materials on study vision and goals, proposed facility types for consideration as well as present the candidate route which was developed based on input from the stakeholder working group session.

The goal of the first PIC was:

***“To introduce the public to the project and to hear from them regarding the issues and opportunities related to a Lake-t-Lake cycling route and the design of such a route.”***

The PICs were ‘open-house’ format and were promoted using a notice which was posted on the Region’s webpage, a number of publications in regional and local municipal newsletters as well as postings on the Region’s Facebook page. The notice provided study background information as well as additional ways in which the residents could get involved including a link to the online questionnaire and contact information for study representatives.

#### 4.3.1 PIC #1 Display Boards

Display boards were developed for the PICs and reviewed by Regional Staff and confirmed for the presentation at the consultation venues. The information which was displayed included:

- Study Introduction, Goals and Objectives;
- Lake to Lake Route Selection Criteria;
- Potential Facility Types for Consideration;
- The Proposed Candidate Route Network; and
- Next Steps.



Some examples of the boards which were presented can be found below. For all additional display boards and consultation materials please refer to **Appendix B**.

### LAKE TO LAKE STUDY INTRODUCTION & WELCOME

*The Region is undertaking a comprehensive design feasibility study that will help determine the route alignment, design and details about how the route will be implemented within the Region.*

**Study Objectives:**

- Linking routes to transit facilities;
- Providing connection between routes and points of interest throughout the Region; and
- Establishing a recreational cycling route and walking trail to allow people to experience the beautiful, natural and cultural heritage in York Region.

**Region's Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (2008):** the Regional Municipality of York identified a cycling route and walking trail that will span from Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario promoting alternate forms of travel, such as combining walking and cycling with public transit.

**Primary Study Area:** the lake to lake corridor conceptually connects Lake Simcoe to the north with the City of Toronto at the East Don Parklands near Leslie Street and makes use of the city's cycling facilities to Lake Ontario.

LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL 2

### LAKE TO LAKE ROUTE SELECTION CRITERIA

Route Selection Criteria are used to help inform the development of the Lake-to-Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail and consider the following:

- Regional goals and objectives** of a Lake-to-Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail;
- User Experience** including features associated with a desirable, connections and logical route; and
- Safety and Design Feasibility Criteria** including features associated with safety, design feasibility and maintenance.

**HIGH-LEVEL REGIONAL ROUTE SELECTION CRITERIA**

**A. Previous linkages** in terms of cultural and cultural significance.

**B. In a gaps of part of a network** which links Lake Ontario to Lake Simcoe.

**C. Builds upon established Regional and local municipal cycle routes and walking trails.**

**DESIRABLE**

1. Scenic & Attractive
2. Demonstrates Existing and/or Future Demand
3. Perception of Safety and Security
4. Level of Conflict
5. Topography
6. Consistent with Local Function (Streets and Goals)

**CONNECTED**

7. Links Significant Destinations and Attractions
8. Connects Significant Population Centres
9. Access Services and Amenities
10. Provides Intermodal Links

**LOGICAL**

11. Easy to Follow
12. Connects Major Physical Barriers
13. Meets User Needs

**SAFETY AND DESIGN FEASIBILITY CRITERIA**

**Route Characteristics & Safety Considerations**

1. Motor Vehicle Traffic Volume
3. Road and Commercial Vehicle Traffic
4. Significance
5. Intersections
6. Visibility

**Design Feasibility & Maintenance**

7. Make the Best Use of Existing Infrastructure (Cycling and Walking Infrastructure)
8. Appropriateness of Facility Type
9. Local Commitment
10. Benefits vs. Investment Cost
11. Operations and Maintenance

LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL 3

### POTENTIAL FACILITY TYPES

LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL 4

### POTENTIAL FACILITY TYPES CONT'D.

LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL 5

Throughout the PIC attendees were encouraged to speak with the study team members including Regional staff regarding the proposed route as well as the route selection criteria and facilities types.

#### 4.3.2 Key Highlights: Hillcrest Mall, June 1, 2012

On Friday's event at Hillcrest Mall, approximately 50 people were in attendance. At least 7 noted that they came to the Mall specifically for the Lake to Lake Cycling Open House. Starting at 3:00 p.m., attendees were asked to provide their comments to the study team as well as on the mapping provided. The following are some of the comments which were provided:

- All were very supportive of the project and wanted to know when construction of the missing links would start
- Majority preferred an off-road multi-use trail and a paved surface rather than an on-road cycling route and sidewalk
- One attendee in an electric wheelchair was highly supportive of replacing a sidewalk on one side of Leslie Street in Richmond Hill with a 3.0 m paved trail. He noted that people with spinal cord injuries who rely on electric wheel chairs for mobility find the lateral and vertical shifts in sidewalks

due to frost etc. uncomfortable (bumpy ride). This individual suggested that a paved multi-use trail would be well received by those who rely on wheel chairs in York Region for mobility

- Several people noted that the proposed corridor for the Lake to Lake Trail is central to most residents in York Region and links / access to public transit should be clearly mapped
- Should have benches and garbage bins strategically placed along trail
- Paved trails in the more urban parts of the Region should be considered, with gravel surface perhaps in more rural parts of the Region
- Lake to Lake Trail should connect with the Regional and Local Municipal on-road and off-road cycling and trail networks, both existing and proposed as well as Conservation Authority lands and York Regional forests
- Need more bike lanes in business and commercial areas where people work
- York Region should also focus much more money on education
- A multi-faceted trail and active transportation system is needed, like Europe. This means a direct dedicated bike lane network on busier roads for those who want to travel to work / school by bike and a separate connected mostly off-road multi-use trail network that is designed for recreation but can also be used by young children and seniors who may not have the skills or comfort level to ride on road
- Why is York Region not building cycle tracks or wider bike lanes on the busy roads like they do overseas or in New York?
- This is one of the best ideas I have seen from York Region in years. Providing a recreational walking and cycling route from Lake Simcoe down the centre of York Region to connect to Toronto and Lake Ontario will benefit all residents, young and old. Make it a priority.

In addition to the maps, the study team developed a board which was used to gather information on the level of comfort perceived by the public for walking and cycling facilities types. Similar to the question posed in the online questionnaire, respondents typically noted that they were comfortable with off road facilities such as multi-



use trails or more separated facilities such as bike lanes.

### 4.3.3 Key Highlights: Aurora Streets Festival, June 3, 2012

At the Aurora Street Festival, the study team was able to speak with hundreds of people over the course of the day. The festival typically attracts 35,000 to 40,000 people and this year even with the weather was extremely busy drawing a wide range of individuals to the study booth. By strategically choosing this location, the study team was able to expose the project to people who may not have been able to be involved in a typical public engagement session. The following are some key comments and recommendations which were gathered from the event.



- A number of those who attended the York Region Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail echoed the comments received at the Hillcrest Mall Open House the previous Friday afternoon.
- Many people passing the booth appeared to be aware of the project through Open House advertisements in local papers.
- We estimate about a dozen people came to the Street Festival specifically for the Lake to Lake Trail Open House.
- Everyone we spoke with agreed the proposed corridor was the best for this trail, though one person suggested the trail should also connect to major trails in Vaughan in Markham somehow.
- Several people suggested the trail should be partly funded by developers.
- Provide parking areas at key points along the trail should be considered.
- The trail needs good signage to tell people how to access the trail and once on it, where they are and where they can go.
- Note locations of public bathrooms within close proximity of the trail.
- Make sure the trail can accommodate people in wheelchairs and walkers.
- Most people indicated they were most comfortable cycling on off-road trails but if routes are on road then bike lanes are needed.

- A couple of people suggested coloured bike lanes on busy roads and at intersections would improve conditions for cycling in York Region – learn from Europe.
- A number of people who attended indicated they commuted by bicycle and off-road trails would not appeal to them because time is a critical factor in their route choices. These same people pointed out the buffered bike lanes are a good idea on busy roads and physically separating the bike lanes, perhaps with planters or concrete curbs like they do in Europe and the States, would be better.
- One gentleman indicated he currently commutes by bike on Highway 7 from McCowan to Woodbine every day and it is faster than when he drove his car to work. He thinks adding the buffered bike lanes illustrated on one of the display boards would be a big improvement for Highway 7, but he would not encourage children to ride on Highway 7 and suggests they should use residential streets. He prefers to ride on road and finds riding on sidewalks dangerous.
- A couple of people asked who was going to pay for it.
- A couple of families with young children who dropped by the booth (at different times) were very excited about the proposed trail as they were planning to locate in York Region and would like to be near this great trail.

#### 4.4 Public Information Centre #2

Following the completion of Phase 2, the study team undertook a second set of Public Information Centres (PICs). Similar to the approach used for the first round of PICs, the study team held two public events at two locations in the Region. The PIC goal was to target the widest range of responses and input to the deliverables from Phase 2. The events were held in November 2012 over the course of one weekend. The specific dates and locations of the PICs are as follows:

##### Friday November 16th, 2012

6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Holland Landing Community Centre

19513 Yonge Street, Holland Landing, ON L9N 1L8

##### Saturday November 17, 2012

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Oak Ridges Community Centre

12895 Bayview Avenue, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 4P9

On both dates, representatives from the consultant team as well as the Region gathered to engage members of the public through informal “drop-in” sessions. These sessions were used to present the confirmed Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail, results from the online questionnaire, design guidelines as well as some of the conceptual / functional design concepts. The goal of the second PIC was:

***“To present the preferred route, the conceptual / functional design for the entire corridor, typical details and cross sections, branding opportunities as well as proposed recommendations and policies related to implementation such as funding and partnership strategies.”***

The PICs were ‘open-house’ format and were promoted throughout the community using the same approach as the first PIC (e.g. notice posted on the Regional Facebook page, local newsletters, email /



invitation to stakeholders etc.). The notice was also sent to local stakeholders who had either attended the first PIC or who had expressed interest in attending future consultation events as part of the online questionnaire. The notice provided an overview of what had been completed as part of the Phase 2 of the study and additional ways in which the residents could get involved.

### 4.4.1 PIC #2 Display Boards

Display boards were developed for the second round of PICs. The information was reviewed by Regional Staff and confirmed for the consultation event. The information which was displayed included:

- Study Introduction, Schedule, Process & Online Questionnaire Results;
- Route Network Development Process & Route Selection Criteria;
- Phase 2 Study Outcomes & Potential Facility Types;
- Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail Design Concept; and
- Next Steps.

Some examples of the boards which were presented can be found below. For all additional display boards and consultation materials please refer to **Appendix C** of Volume 1.

#### HOW WAS THE ROUTE NETWORK DEVELOPED?

**What was developed for the Phase 2 Report?**

- #1: Regional Route Map
- #2: Preferred Route by Municipality
- #3: Design Feasibility Sheets by Segment

**This step included...**

- Document the rationale for the preferred alignment;
- Recommend preferred facility types by route segment;
- Identify key design elements (e.g. road crossings, bridges, municipal infrastructure impacts and other design considerations); and
- Identify future regional, local municipal and agency approval considerations.

LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL  
Public Information Centre #2

#### POTENTIAL FACILITY TYPES

Off-Road Multi-use Pathways

Shared Use Active Transportation (AT) Paths

Shared-Only Cycling Route on Local Roads

Shared Lane Markings

Please note that 3.0m is the preferred width for shared-use facilities (including for groups, above and to the right).

LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL  
Public Information Centre #2

#### Georgina (South)

LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL  
Public Information Centre #2

#### Newmarket

LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL  
Public Information Centre #2

Throughout the PIC attendees were encouraged to speak with the study team members regarding the information presented, more specifically the route / design concept.

#### 4.4.2 *Key Highlights: Holland Landing Community Centre (November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012)*

On Friday's event at the Holland Landing Community Centre, approximately 25 people were in attendance. The PIC started at 6:00 p.m. and attendees were asked to provide their comments to the study team regarding the information provided. All attendees were supportive of the project and the majority voiced their preference for an off-road multi-use trail design application along the route. The following are some of the more specific comments which were provided to the study team from the comment forms submitted:

- People would use the route for walking and cycling touring purposes if it were developed.
- Several attendees had heard of the PIC through local newspapers such as the ERA Banner (Newmarket / Aurora) and The Liberal Newspaper (Thornhill).
- Several families were enthusiastic and supportive of the Lake to Lake Route and had attended the event to gain further information of the route alignment.
- Use crushed concrete in lieu of asphalt where possible – pedestrians can hear cyclists approaching on stone dust trails while bikes are very quiet on asphalt surfaces.
- Identify crossing trail systems on maps (e.g. Oak Ridges Moraine Trail).
- Washrooms along the way are a must.
- Keep it away from multi-ton stinking vehicles (Go off-road or you are killing people).
- If separate lanes can be made, that would be preferred.
- The route should accommodate commuters from Holland Landing to Newmarket.
- Ensure the route will provide connections and allow for long trips.
- The trail should be especially well marked in neighbourhoods with kilometre markers for emergency services / purposes.
- Trails are important part of our infrastructure. Having a well-connected and well developed interconnected trail system is very important to the well-being of our society.
- The route should have signs for cyclists that read the following:
  - Cyclists must have a bell and give warning when overtaking pedestrians; or
  - Cyclists must give warning when overtaking pedestrians.
- The trail should be widened to about 5 metres in high use areas to make it safer for cyclists to get by pedestrians without collisions. It would not be necessary to widen bridges.

#### 4.4.3 *Key Highlights: Oak Ridges Community Centre (November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012)*

On Saturday morning's event at the Oak Ridges Community Centre, approximately 40 people were in attendance. The PIC started at 9:00 a.m. and attendees were asked to provide their comments to the study team. All attendees were supportive of the project and many had indicated that the trail would support tourism as well as accommodate recreational and commuter active transportation users throughout the Region. Many of the attendees also expressed interest in the development and implementation of



appropriate signage, promotion and outreach initiatives to complement the route. Some attendees represented interest groups and / or key stakeholders who could be consulted with in later stages of the study. The following are some of the key comments which were provided to the study team:

## Comments from Forms Submitted

- Several people had heard of the event through local newspapers, online and information posted at the Oak Ridges Community Centre.
- Keep public aware as sections are completed to keep interest up. They will use sections as they become available.
- The route should provide more accessible trails.
- The route should be well marked and to the most possible extent, avoid the use of high traffic roads with shoulders as the only space for bicycles.
- Dedicated multi-use paths would be my preference.
- Separate trail for walking and cycling near Lake Wilcox should be considered.

### Questions Posed from comment forms submitted:

- Will there be areas that are well-lit? Will equestrians be provided for in certain sections?
- I'm excited about this proposed route. When will it be completed?

## Comments from Display Boards

The following are the written comments that were placed on the display boards by open house attendees.

### About this Study

- Study Objectives should include commuting routes (e.g. for people wishing to walk / cycle to work).

### Where did you come from today?

- Think longer term / bigger picture about creating a loop around Lake Simcoe.
- Link or loop into York Regional forests for off-road trail extension.
- Trails map here to show Oak Ridges Corridor Conservation Reserve Trail east-west and north-south.
- Existing creek along Highway 7 and Highway 407 overpasses. A path along this creek would be a good way to get across Highway 7 and Highway 407.
- A majority of people have indicated they reside within York Region, with the exception of one attendee from Simcoe County.
- An attendee at the event resides on Georgina Island.

### **Town of Georgina (North)**

- Need an east-west road route along Metro Road North for road cyclists – this should be in addition to Lake Drive.
- The pink (signed route) is a great route but needs a bike line; road is very narrow.
- Is there a program for cyclists to donate to the construction of the route?
- Think about a raised platform for cycle track on higher speed roads.
- Make the roll out of this plan public so people can be informed about what is being built each year.
- Road is not a continuous loop on Georgina Island; road is rough at north end of the island. Trails on the island exist.
- Excellent idea of proposing a major trailhead at Virginia Beach.

### **Town of Georgina (South)**

- Existing crossing between Shoreline Place and Metropolitan Crescent needs an upgrade immediately.
- The Queensway South needs to go on a road diet with boulevards.
- Engage in discussion with Heritage Lake Simcoe – good to use.

### **Town of East Gwillimbury**

- Concerned about the width of Yonge Street north of the Queensville Sideroad especially north of Morgan's Road. Can it accommodate a bicycle path?
- Put trail in Anchor Park north to Maple Street, west across Yonge St to road allowance on west side.
- Would prefer that it was paved and lit (e.g. Tom Taylor Trail where it is well used).
- Historical Site – Newmarket Canal Lock and Toll Bridge.
- Points of Interest – Soldiers Bay (Queensville) and Toll Road (Old Road to Toll Ferry).
- Informational signage with key numbers and mile (km) markers along the route.
- Provide safe access points and exit points along the route.
- Signage to be concise and not cluttered but promote the route.
- Potential to piggy back on other infrastructure (e.g. UYSS – Adrian Coombs).

### **Town of Newmarket**

- Add image of trail north of Green Lane.
- Historical Site – existing Info Panel Swing Bridge and Newmarket Canal Lock / Dam.
- Great idea to include painted lines at Timothy Street.

### **Town of Aurora**

- Combination of branded signage with key maps to anticipate facility type / route changes.



- Add the intersection with the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail.
- Linear distance markers are needed.
- Potential to accommodate small parking area at Town pumping station (south of Vandorf Sideroad).

### **Town of Richmond Hill**

- Watershed divide north Bloomington Road at Bayview Avenue.
- Highly desirable trail connection to Oak Ridges Trail.
- The Town of Richmond Hill has great green space located at Phyllis Rawlinson Park, located on Leslie Street north of Elgin Mills Road.
- Parallel to Gamble Road, potential bicycle and walking trail (connect Bathurst Street and Yonge Street).

### **City of Markham**

- Will a curb make a difference to safety? (In response to the preferred route on Leslie Street and Highway 407).
- Would like to see better east-west bike paths over the 404 such as 16th Avenue, Highway 7 and Major Mackenzie Road.
- Excited the route will run along Leslie Pumping Station (German Mills Settlers Park).

### **What would you like to see?**

- Many people indicated the importance of developing distance and wayfinding signage; trailheads (with some combination of benches, washrooms, parking and rest areas); and interpretive signage at key location to highlight areas of cultural and natural significance.
- Several attendees also provided additional comments to ideas that should be considered such as:
  - Sufficient width to allow both walking and cycling (not as in new trail from Parker Avenue to Verdi Drive; too limited);
  - Connection to existing trails;
  - Off-road connection to all villages – satisfy our travel needs without danger and pollution;
  - Off-road is safer;
  - Bridges across canals;
  - Complete connection – no suddenly disappearing transitions (Use wayfinding to make the connection in interim conditions);
  - Night sky star gazing site (Dunlop Observation to be highlighted)
  - Heritage markers;
  - Camping;
  - Consider winter use; snowshoeing and Nordic (cross-country) skiing; and
  - Off-road trails for year round equine / horseback riding.

## 4.5 Public Information Centre #3

In addition to the two events which were held for the second public information centre, a third public information centre was held on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at the request of the Town of Georgina specifically for Georgina residents. The third public information centre was held at the TOC – Chalet “Recreational Outdoor Campus” in Keswick, ON and the materials which were presented were consistent with those that were on display at PIC #2. The event was promoted using a notice which was published on the study webpage as well as in the Georgina newsletter

The goal of the third public information centre was to provide residents from the Town of Georgina with the opportunity to give their input / comments to the study deliverables including the preferred route, proposed facility types and functional / conceptual design of the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail. The PIC was attended by Regional staff and was open-house format. Attendees were encouraged to speak with Regional representatives and provide their comments directly on the map. There were few attendees to the event and the comments received were consistent with those which had been provided at the previous PICs. Overall there was support from attendees for the development of a Lake to Lake Route through Georgina to promote walking and cycling.

## 5.0 PREFERRED ROUTE ALIGNMENT

The tasks undertaken as part of Phase 1 were intended to document existing conditions and further refine the candidate route for the Lake to Lake Route. More specifically, the study team used policies, plans and mapping provided by the Region as well as its local municipalities, preliminary field investigation, existing on and off-road connections and the comments received from the public and stakeholders to confirm the preferred route alignment.

**Maps 5.1** through **5.6** illustrate the preferred route alignment which will be investigated in further detail later in the study to confirm the proposed alignment and to assess the feasibility of the route. **Map 5.1** illustrates the full regional network while **Maps 5.2** through **5.6** illustrate the route by segments based on municipality.

## 6.0 DATABASE DEVELOPMENT

Regional staff provided the study team with a digital Geographic Information System (GIS) database as well as digital ortho (aerial) photography of the Region. The information included:

- Existing and proposed roads;
- Existing on and off -road cycling and trail routes (as per the 2011 York Region Cycling Map);
- Points of interest and attractions (including recreational facilities); and
- Parks, lakes and rivers.



In addition, local municipal staff provided the study team with key GIS information regarding Land Use, Zoning and Active Transportation (Cycling and Trails) Networks.

The information was consolidated and used to prepare existing context maps. The study team used these maps in accordance and the route selection criteria to develop a preliminary preferred Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail and, potential route alternatives, where necessary. Potential connections to other major regional trail systems and major destinations were also identified through this process. The maps were also reviewed in detail by Regional and local municipal staff. Please refer to **Maps 5.1 – 5.6** for Preliminary Candidate Routing of Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail.

Following this, the preliminary candidate route alternatives were investigated in the field to confirm their suitability for inclusion as part of the Preliminary Candidate Route for the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail. Waypoints and photographs were taken at key locations along the corridor and throughout the region. The waypoints represented various features including but not limited to:

- Route features (trailheads, park benches, etc.);
- Road cross-sections;
- Design constraints and considerations; and
- Destinations and points of interest.

A KML file (a format used to display geographic data in an Earth browser such as Google Earth, Google Maps, and Google Maps for mobile), was developed to present the preliminary routing, waypoints and corresponding photos. The KML allows for users who have internet access to view the preliminary routing, waypoints and photos within the Google maps environment, aiding in the understanding of fieldwork and routing decisions done to date. Please refer to the figure / illustration above as an example of the way waypoints will be illustrated as a study deliverable.

# YORK REGION LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL PRELIMINARY CANDIDATE ROUTING ENTIRE REGION - MAP 5.1

**LEGEND**

- Existing Off Road Facilities
- Proposed Off Road Facilities
- Existing On Road Facilities
- Proposed On Road Facilities
- Preferred Candidate Lake to Lake Route
- Optional Candidate Lake to Lake Routes
- Oak Ridges Moraine
- Regional Centres
- Multi-Lane Provincial Highway
- Provincial Highway Road
- Railway
- Municipal Boundary
- Regional Boundary
- Lake
- River
- Town or Village
- Urban Area

**MMM GROUP**

**York Region**

Source: York Region Cycling Map (2011), East Gwillimbury ATMP (2012), Aurora TMR (2011), Richmond Hill PCMP (2010), Markham Cycling Pathway and Trails 5 Year Implementation Plan (2010). GIS Data provided by York Region and Towns of: East Gwillimbury, Aurora, Markham, and Richmond Hill.



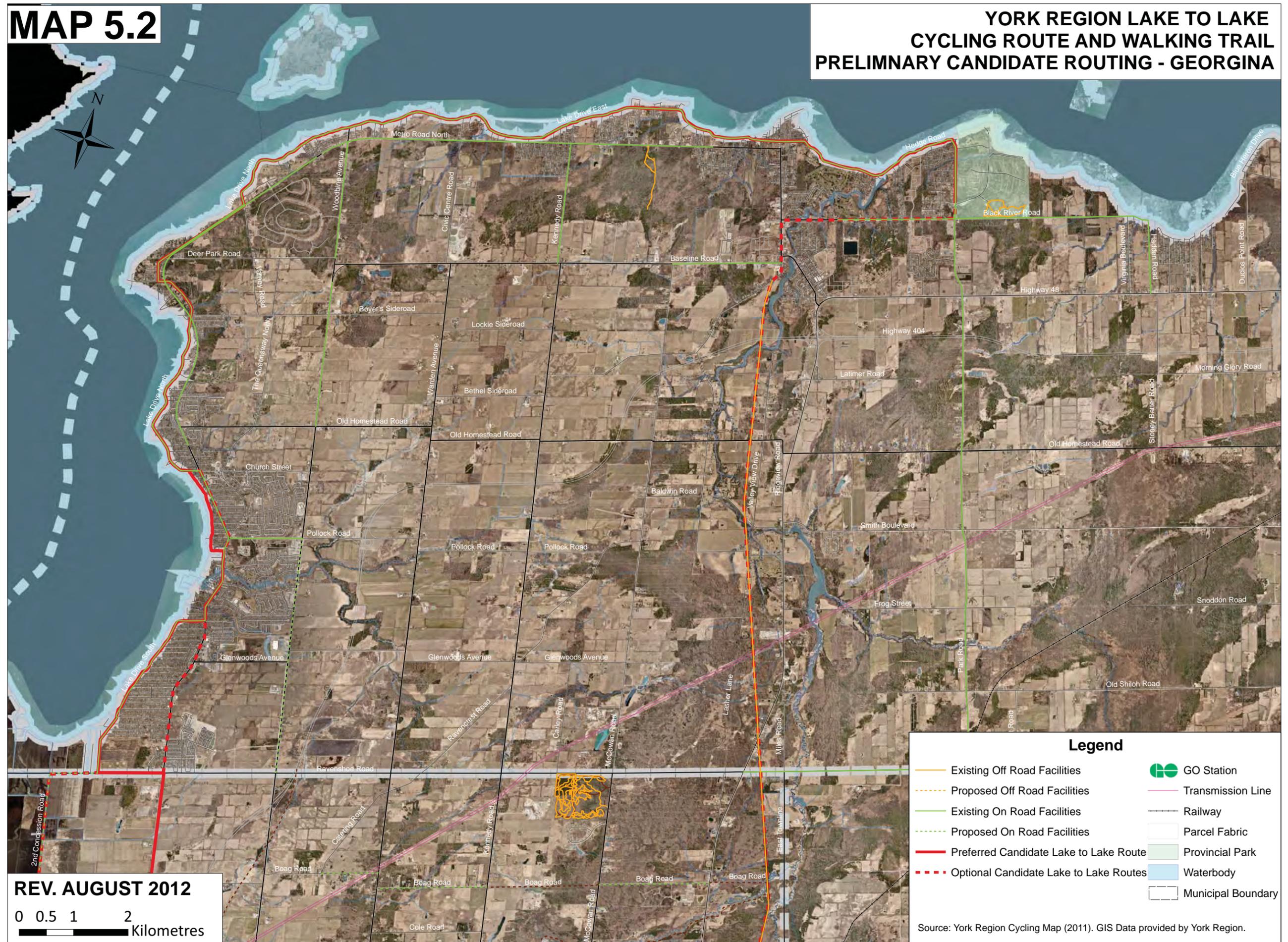
Lake Ontario  
3 1.5 0 3 Km

To East Don River Trail  
- City of Toronto



# MAP 5.2

## YORK REGION LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL PRELIMINARY CANDIDATE ROUTING - GEORGINA



**REV. AUGUST 2012**

0 0.5 1 2  
Kilometres

**Legend**

Existing Off Road Facilities	GO Station
Proposed Off Road Facilities	Transmission Line
Existing On Road Facilities	Railway
Proposed On Road Facilities	Parcel Fabric
Preferred Candidate Lake to Lake Route	Provincial Park
Optional Candidate Lake to Lake Routes	Waterbody
	Municipal Boundary

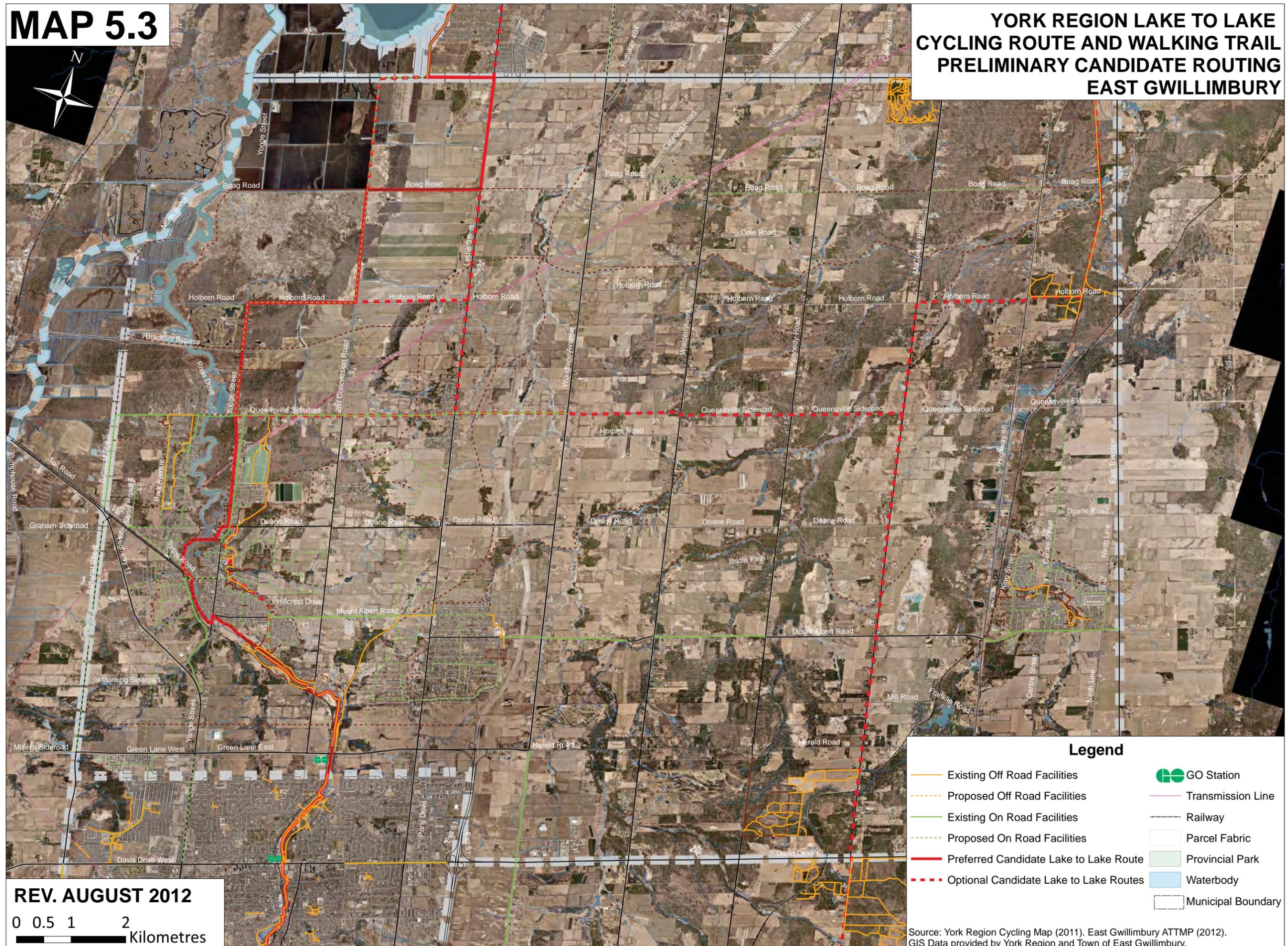
Source: York Region Cycling Map (2011). GIS Data provided by York Region.



# MAP 5.3



## YORK REGION LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL PRELIMINARY CANDIDATE ROUTING EAST GWILLIMBURY



**REV. AUGUST 2012**  
 0 0.5 1 2  
 Kilometres

**Legend**

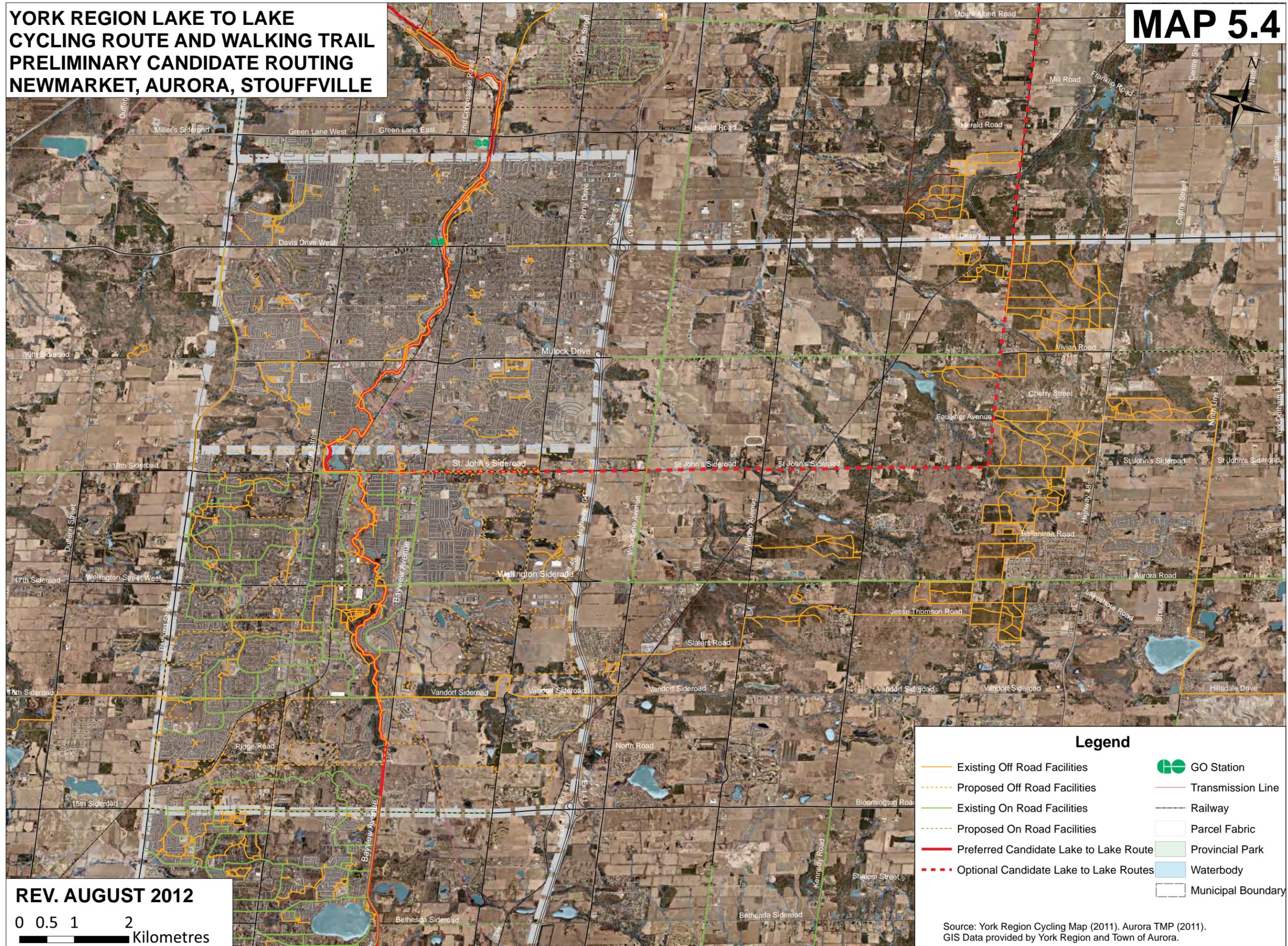
Existing Off Road Facilities	GO Station
Proposed Off Road Facilities	Transmission Line
Existing On Road Facilities	Railway
Proposed On Road Facilities	Parcel Fabric
Preferred Candidate Lake to Lake Route	Provincial Park
Optional Candidate Lake to Lake Routes	Waterbody
	Municipal Boundary

Source: York Region Cycling Map (2011), East Gwillimbury ATTMP (2012). GIS Data provided by York Region and Town of East Gwillimbury.



**YORK REGION LAKE TO LAKE  
CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL  
PRELIMINARY CANDIDATE ROUTING  
NEWMARKET, AURORA, STOUFFVILLE**

**MAP 5.4**



**REV. AUGUST 2012**  
0 0.5 1 2  
Kilometres

**Legend**

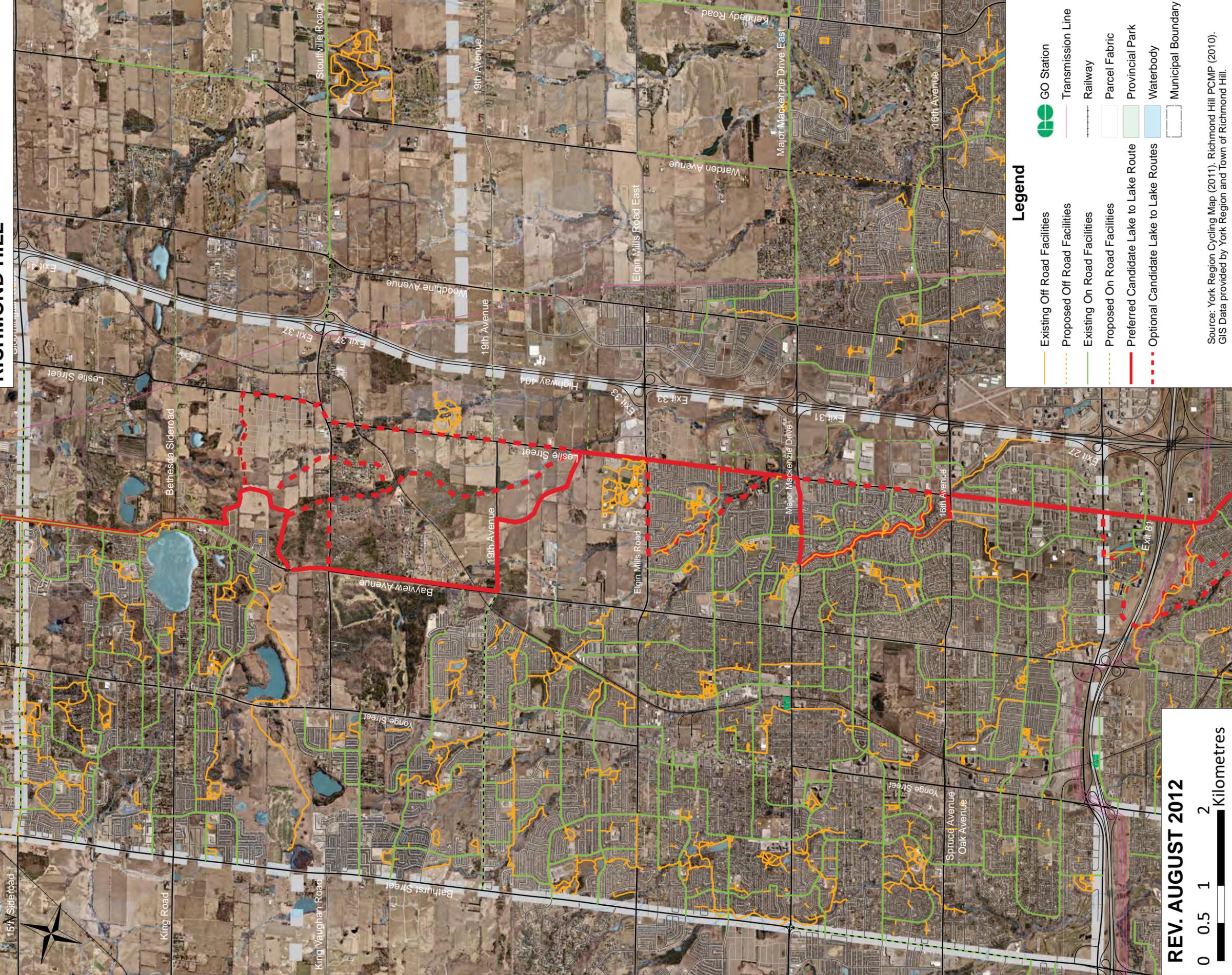
Existing Off Road Facilities	GO Station
Proposed Off Road Facilities	Transmission Line
Existing On Road Facilities	Railway
Proposed On Road Facilities	Parcel Fabric
Preferred Candidate Lake to Lake Route	Provincial Park
Optional Candidate Lake to Lake Routes	Waterbody
	Municipal Boundary

Source: York Region Cycling Map (2011). Aurora TMP (2011). GIS Data provided by York Region and Town of Aurora.



# MAP 5.5

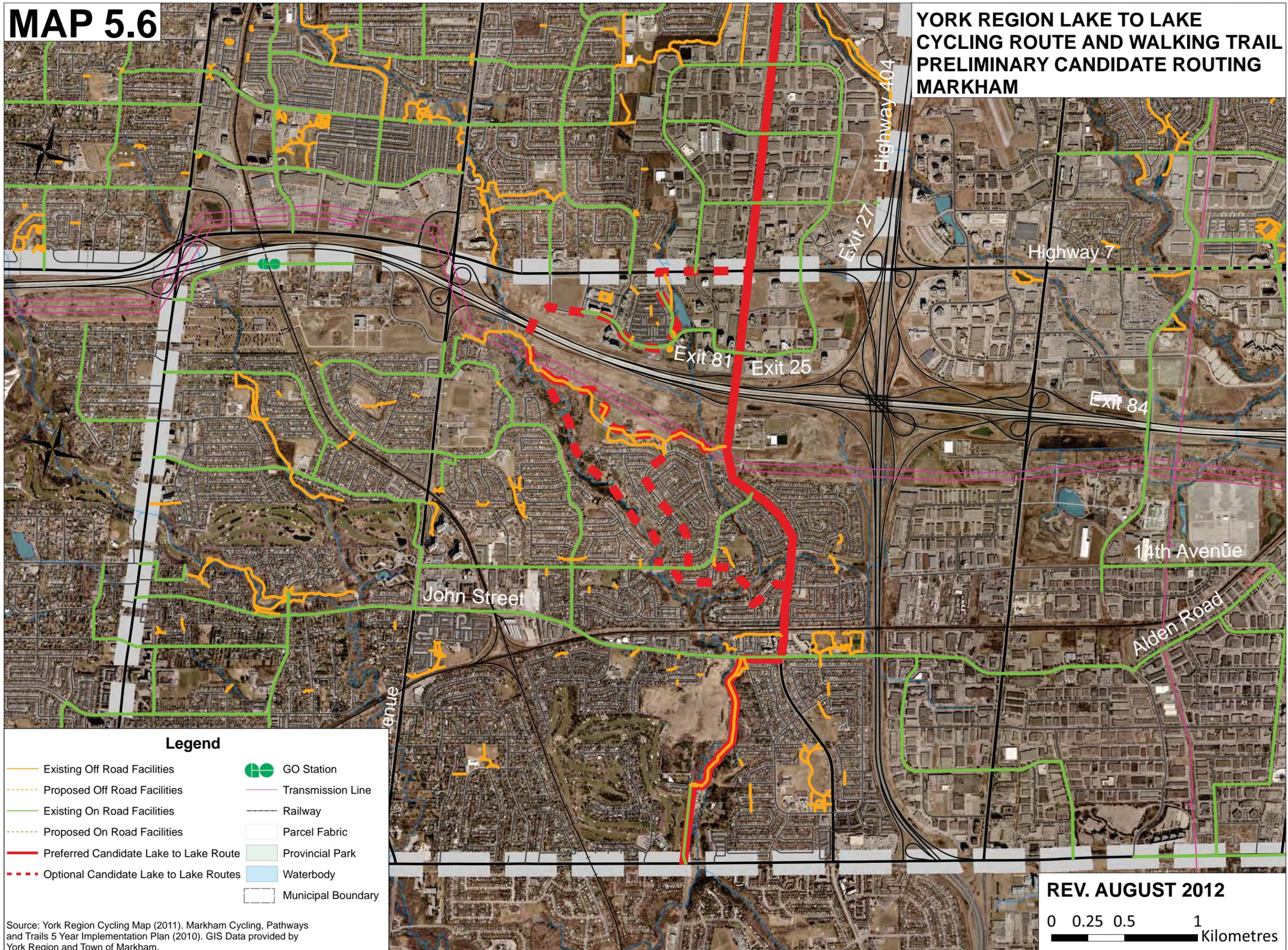
## YORK REGION LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL PRELIMINARY CANDIDATE ROUTING RICHMOND HILL





# MAP 5.6

## YORK REGION LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL PRELIMINARY CANDIDATE ROUTING MARKHAM



### Legend

- Existing Off Road Facilities
- - - Proposed Off Road Facilities
- Existing On Road Facilities
- - - Proposed On Road Facilities
- Preferred Candidate Lake to Lake Route
- - - Optional Candidate Lake to Lake Routes
- GO Station
- Transmission Line
- Railway
- Parcel Fabric
- Provincial Park
- Waterbody
- Municipal Boundary

Source: York Region Cycling Map (2011). Markham Cycling, Pathways and Trails 5 Year Implementation Plan (2010). GIS Data provided by York Region and Town of Markham.

REV. AUGUST 2012





## 7.0 SUMMARY OF PHASE 1

The following summarized the work completed for Phase 1 of the design feasibility study:

- Public and stakeholder input including online questionnaire results and comments and recommendations from the first round of public information centres;
- An understanding of key background information, policies and plans which influence the development of the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail throughout the Region as well as its local municipalities;
- A detailed understanding of the existing conditions and routes found currently “on the ground” along the proposed Lake to Lake connection as well as potential opportunities and barriers for the development of the route;
- A set of route selection criteria which was used to refine the candidate route and will be used to further refine the proposed segments, facility types and design of the proposed route;
- Comments and considerations with regard to the development and design of the Lake to Lake Cycling Route based on public and stakeholder consultation events held throughout Phase 1 of the study process;
- Identification of a preferred route for more detailed investigation to confirm design feasibility; and
- A set of design guidelines which will be considered in further detail throughout the remaining steps in the study process.

The work completed in Phase 1 informed the selection of the preferred route alignment and subsequent detailed design feasibility, both of which are documented in Volume 2.



