



## PEDESTRIAN & CYCLING MASTER PLAN



TOWARDS A MORE  
SUSTAINABLE REGION

## OVERVIEW REPORT



# Towards Active Transportation



## The Need for a Regional-Scale Pedestrian-Cycling Network

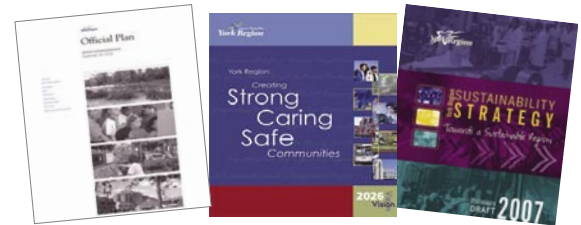
Cycling and walking are efficient, affordable and environmentally friendly modes of travel. Within urban areas, cycling is the fastest method of door-to-door transportation for distances of up to ten kilometres. A shift from motorized vehicles to active transportation can mitigate ozone depletion, ground-level air pollution, the greenhouse effect, traffic noise and urban sprawl. Economic benefits include reduced health care costs, higher productivity and tourism.

## Vision and Goals for the Plan

The primary goals of the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (PCMP) are to:

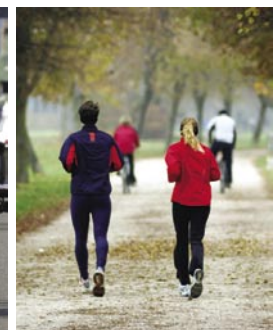
- Provide a convenient and continuous system of sidewalks on Regional and local roads, and a designated region-wide cycling network;
- Continue ongoing consultation with the public, local municipalities and key stakeholders to increase walking and cycling activity as a component of sustainable growth management;
- Provide a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Enhance the overall user experience through the implementation of policies and design standards;
- Develop a communications plan to coordinate educational and marketing programs that promote safety and the benefits of active transportation;
- Work with local municipalities to integrate the pedestrian and cycling networks with existing and proposed transportation facilities; and,
- Utilize partnerships with internal and external organizations and the business community to reduce costs.

***A regional-scale network integrated with local municipal pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and public transit service that connects communities and people of all ages with where they live, work and want to go.***



As part of Planning for Tomorrow Growth Management, the PCMP supports York Region's Official Plan and Vision 2026, the Province of Ontario's Growth Plan, and a number of local municipal policies, plans and initiatives. All of the following Regional plans depend on increasing the level of active transportation:

- Transportation Master Plan;
- York Region Sustainability Strategy;
- York Region Centres and Corridors Strategy;
- Corporate Clean Air Task Force;
- Greening Strategy and Land Securement Initiative;
- Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines; and,
- Towards Great Regional Streets.



# Towards a Sustainable Region



## A Region-wide Cycling Network

During the PCMP research, the top seven suggested improvements for cycling in York Region were:

- Add on-street bike lanes;
- Repair potholes and broken pavement on roads;
- Add or widen bike paths and off-street trails;
- Decrease automobile traffic;
- Introduce shower/change facilities at work;
- Add secure bike parking (lockers); and,
- Provide bike racks at key stops/destinations.

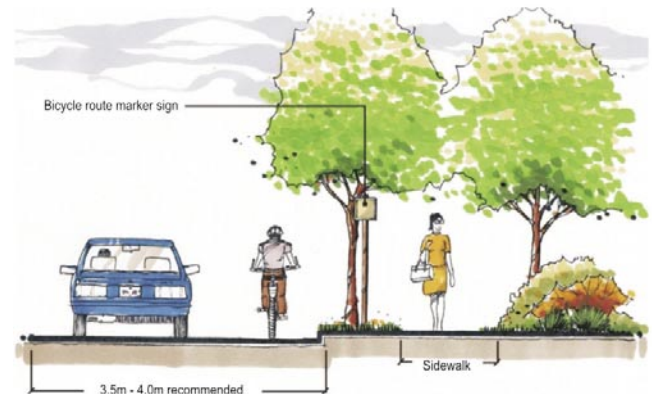
The planned Regional network includes paved shoulder/bike lanes, signed-only cycling routes, and multi-use trails.

A paved shoulder/bike lane, located in the traveled portion of the roadway for one-way cyclist traffic, is denoted by pavement markings and Regional network signage. Bike lanes are typically located on urban streets. Paved shoulders are frequently used to accommodate cyclists on rural road cross-sections.

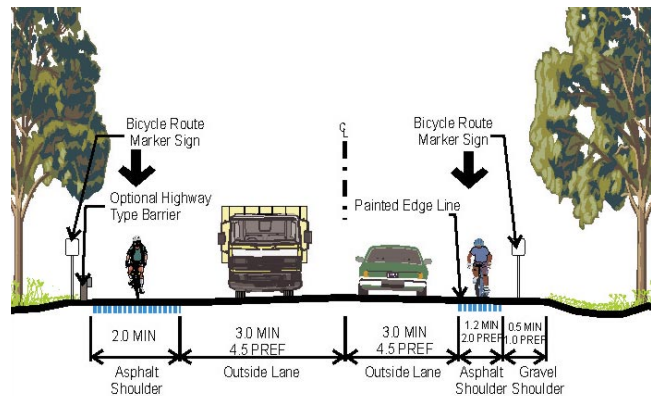
A signed only cycling route requires no physical changes to the roadway other than bicycle route signage. Since cyclists share the pavement and travel lane with motor vehicles, there are no special lane designations. In urban areas where traffic volumes exceed the suggested threshold for a signed-only route, a wider curb lane is often implemented for shared use.

A multi-use trail or path is separated from the traveled portion of a road. It may take the form of a boulevard trail along the right-of-way or an off-road trail through greenlands. Multi-use trails are designed to support the widest range of users, including pedestrians, cyclists, in-line skaters and skateboarders, in locations where the trail surface permits these activities.

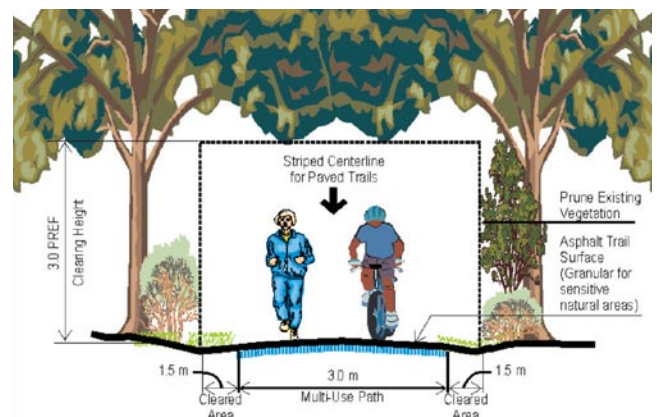
The planned network builds upon and connects local municipal cycling routes and major trail systems to provide approximately 1,035 km of on-road facilities and 209 km of off-road facilities.



Signed-only cycling route wide curb lane



Typical paved shoulder



Multi-use path

***The planned network is intended to support recreational and utilitarian uses, including trips to work or school.***



## User-Friendly Pedestrian Facilities

During the PCMP study research, the top five suggested improvements for walking in York Region were:

- Enhance connections between neighbourhoods;
- Add destinations;
- Add street trees;
- Create interesting places to see along routes; and,
- Add or widen trails in open spaces.

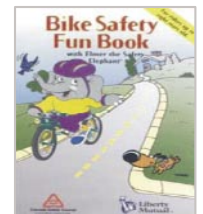
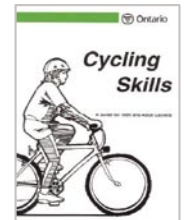
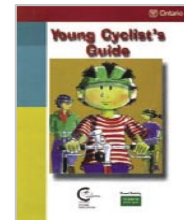
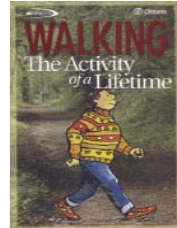
The range and density of recommended pedestrian facilities varies according to location and land use. Implementation is dependent on local municipalities as they have jurisdiction. The PCMP identifies a number of “pedestrian zones” where the infrastructure should be consistent with the Region’s growth management plans. Opportunities for pedestrian-friendly urban design and amenities will be considered during detailed design.

The planned network consists primarily of sidewalks on Regional roads. Any locations where sidewalk links are missing have been identified. In some areas, the network includes linear off-road multi-use trails. The completed system comprises over 683 linear km of sidewalks (486 linear km of this total exist today).

In urban areas, sidewalks should be provided on both sides of arterial and collector roads, and off-road links should facilitate direct connections with transit stations and other key destinations. In suburban areas, it may not be necessary to have sidewalks on both sides of the roads. In rural areas, a paved or granular shoulder can also serve as the pedestrian facility.



***Many jurisdictions have developed educational programs and publications that can be adapted for use in York Region at nominal cost.***



## Public Education and Outreach

Many comments received during the study indicated that a focused effort is required to convince people that walking and cycling are safe, convenient alternatives to the automobile for short trips. Public education is therefore one of the most important components of the planned strategy.

According to a Canadian Institute of Health Information study, cycling puts more people in the hospital than any other summer activity in Ontario. The Ontario Trauma Registry reports that children aged 5 to 14 are most likely to incur injuries while cycling. The implementation of new programs and the continuation of existing initiatives will require comprehensive communications and an education program to help reduce the likelihood of cycling-related injuries. Many jurisdictions in Canada have developed materials and programs that can be adapted for Regional use:

- CANBIKE cycling courses for all ages and skill levels;
- Road and Trail Safety Ambassador Program;
- S.P.A.C.E. traffic education for all road users;
- Bike Bus Program to increase cycling awareness and education
- Bicycle User Groups (BUGs); and,
- Publications and brochures to educate citizens about both cycling and pedestrian safety.

***Every street is a pedestrian street.***



Similar programs can be delivered in York Region by partnering with internal and external organizations such as York Regional Police, York Region Community and Health Services, local municipalities, school boards, Transport Canada, Canada Safety Council, Ministry of Transportation of Ontario, Ministry of Health, Ontario Cycling Association and the business community.

Promotional materials will include a user-friendly York Region cycling map, which will be produced by 2009 and updated on a regular basis to highlight new routes. Cycling and hiking are popular tourist activities, and the private sector and other stakeholders will be encouraged to invest in the promotion of York Region as a destination for visitors.



## Implementing the PCMP

The overall direction for the PCMP was established through extensive community and stakeholder effort. Additional priorities will evolve through planning, technical review and capital budget processes. Any changes to policies and the network should also be considered through York Region's Official Plan and Transportation Master Plan reviews. To provide future flexibility, the pedestrian-cycling network will be delivered in three phases over a 25-year period.

Phase 1 is a 5-year action plan. The process to manage the program includes:

- The Pedestrian and Cycling Public Advisory Committee, which comprises public representatives from each community as well as Regional and local municipal staff, to provide a forum to address key issues;

- A Pedestrian/Cycling Coordinator to guide implementation by working with internal and external partners and committees, and coordinating staff resources, annual budgets, program delivery, performance measures and annual progress reports;
- The Municipal Partnership Program, through which York Region will contribute up to 50% of the construction cost of approved project submissions from local municipalities and agencies /stakeholders; and,
- An Inter-Municipal Working Group that includes staff from each of the local municipalities, conservation authorities, school boards as well as the Regional Planning, Health, Transportation and Police Services to review and coordinate progress.

Phase 1 is proposed to deliver:

- 260 km of bike lanes /paved shoulders;
- 34 km of multi-use trails;
- 85 km of signed bike routes; and,
- 45 km of sidewalks.

Phase 2 will continue the network implementation and programs for the next 5-year period. Together, Phases 1 and 2 coincide with York Region's 10-Year Roads Construction Program.

Phase 2 is proposed to deliver:

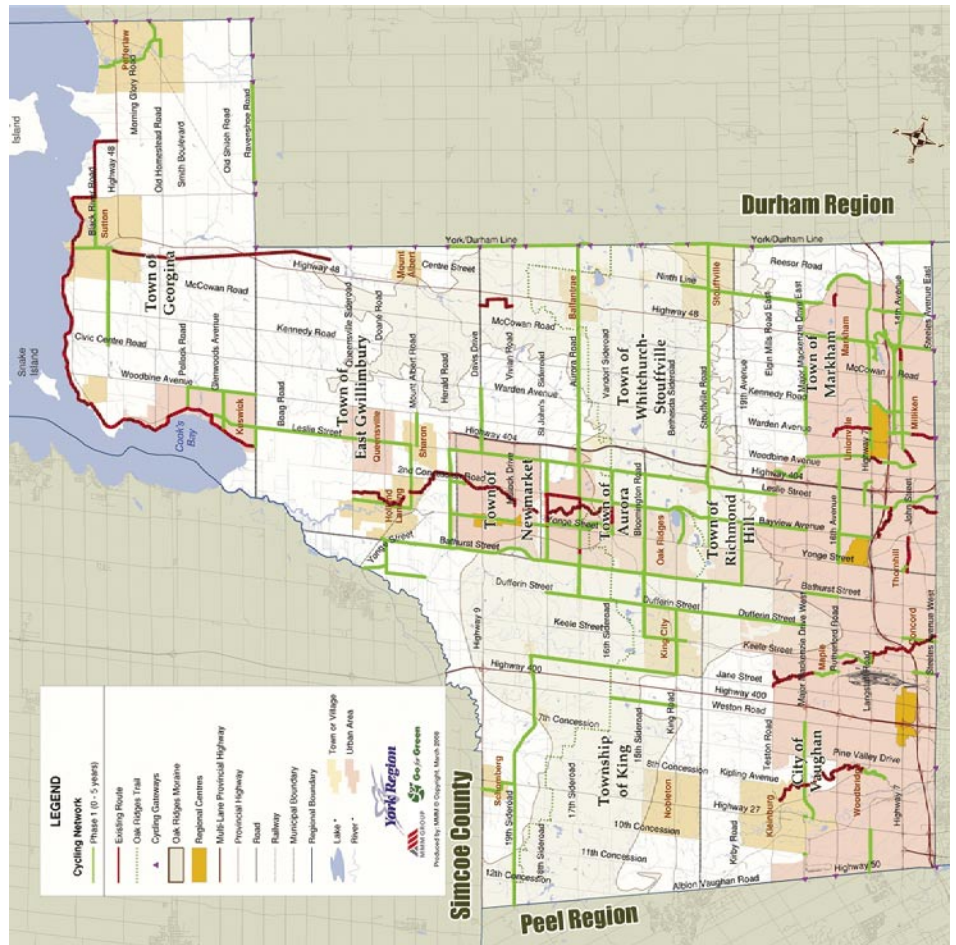
- 198 km of bike lanes /paved shoulders;
- 27 km of multi-use trails;
- 39 km of signed bike routes; and,
- 17 km of sidewalks.

Since Phase 3 is part of the longer-term strategy, its elements will be confirmed and incorporated into updates of the PCMP and capital roads program.

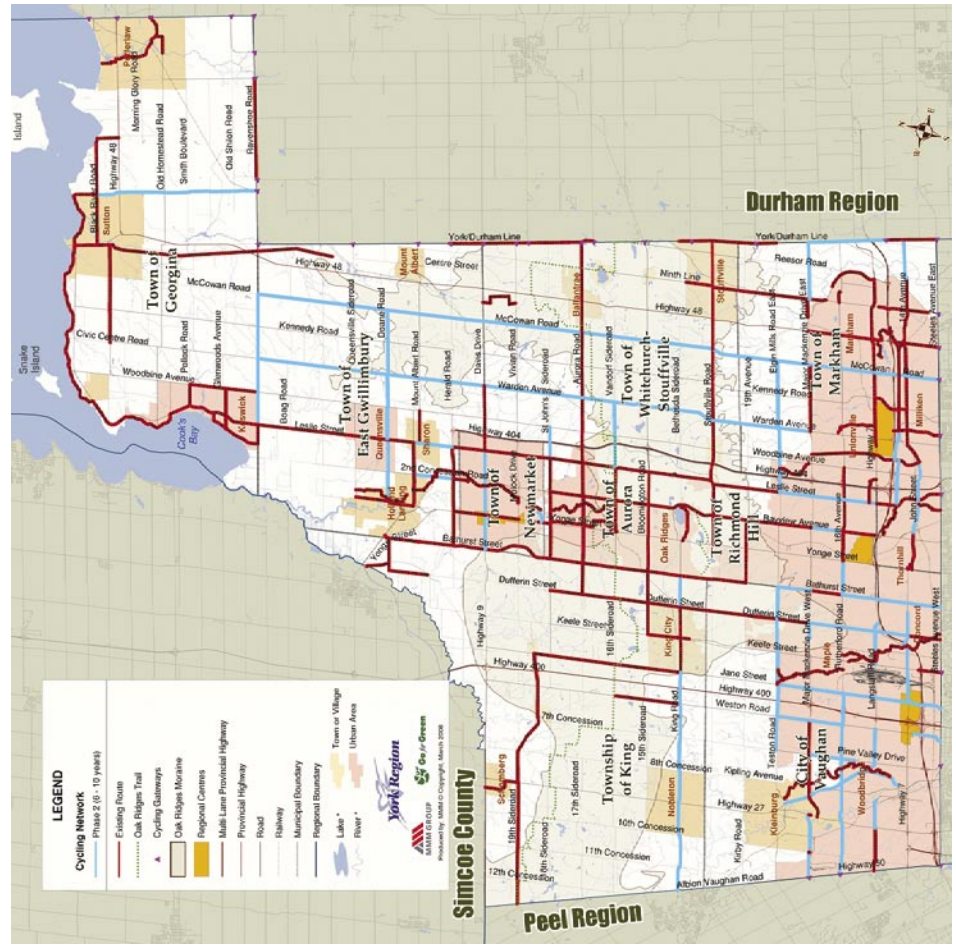


## CYCLING NETWORK

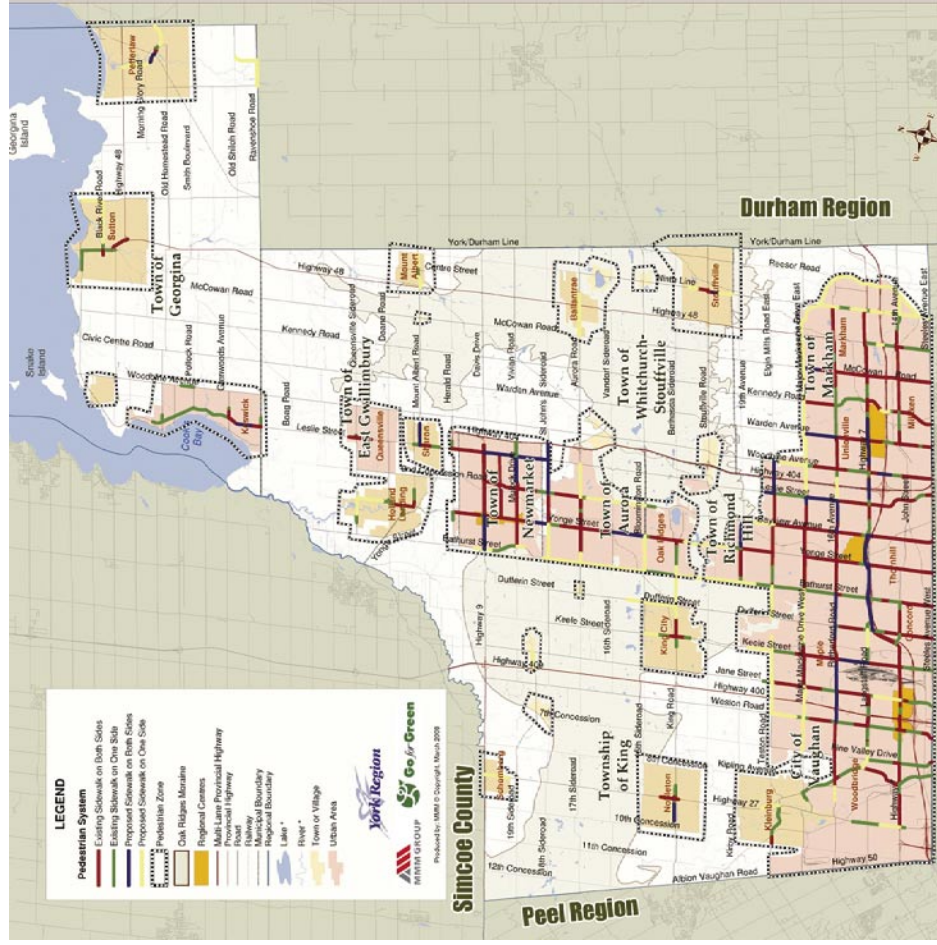
### Phase 1 (0-5 Years)



## CYCLING NETWORK Phase 2 (6-10 Years)

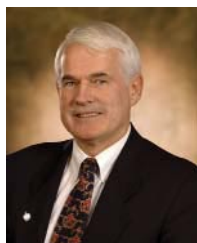


## LONG TERM CYCLING NETWORK





Mayor  
Frank Scarpitti  
Town of Markham



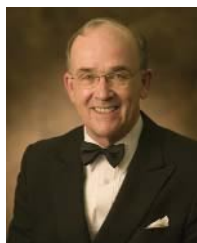
Regional Councillor  
Jim Jones  
Town of Markham



Regional Councillor  
Jack Heath  
Town of Markham



Regional Councillor  
Tony Wong  
Town of Markham



Regional Councillor  
Gordon Landon  
Town of Markham



Mayor  
David Barrow  
Town of Richmond Hill



Mayor  
Linda D. Jackson  
City of Vaughan



Chairman and CEO  
Bill Fisch



Regional Councillor  
Brenda Hogg  
Town of Richmond Hill



Regional Councillor  
Joyce Frustaglio  
City of Vaughan



Regional Councillor  
Mario Ferri  
City of Vaughan



Regional Councillor  
Gino Rosati  
City of Vaughan



Mayor  
Robert Grossi  
Town of Georgina



Regional Councillor  
Danny Wheeler  
Town of Georgina



Mayor  
Phyllis M. Morris  
Town of Aurora



Mayor  
Wayne Emmerson  
Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville



Mayor  
James Young  
Town of East Gwillimbury



Mayor  
Margaret Black  
Township of King

## A Message from Regional Council

York Regional Council strongly supports this Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan initiative that focuses on the provision of sidewalks, bike lanes and multi-use trails to interconnect walking and cycling pathways throughout the Region.

A community with walking and bike paths is more liveable. They allow residents and visitors more opportunities to enjoy the outdoors and maintain health and wellness through exercise. An extensive, inter-connected system of walking and biking facilities will enrich the quality of life and provide better mobility for our residents for years to come.

In addition, a shift to alternate forms of transportation, such as walking, bicycling, public transit and carpooling, can greatly reduce vehicle greenhouse gas emissions that are a major source of poor air quality. Poor air quality adversely impacts our health and can cause illness in people with heart and lung conditions. Those at particular risk include young children, the elderly, asthmatics and anyone with existing respiratory or coronary conditions.

Reducing traffic congestion also leads to a more efficient transportation network. Moving people and goods in a timely manner is necessary to help our economy remain competitive and prosperous.

As York Region continues to grow and urbanize, our walking and cycling facilities will help to make our communities more sustainable. In partnership with our local municipalities, we will implement this plan and build on our strengths to ensure that York Region continues to be an attractive place to live and work.



Regional Councillor  
Vito Spatafora  
Town of Richmond Hill



Mayor  
Tony Van Bynen  
Town of Newmarket



Regional Councillor  
John Taylor  
Town of Newmarket