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LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL PROGRESS REPORT

The Transportation Services Committee recommends:

- 1. Receipt of the presentation by Richard Hui, Manager, Transportation Planning; and**
- 2. Adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated September 17, 2012, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Community Planning.**

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. Copies of this report be forwarded to the Clerks of the local municipalities in York Region, City of Toronto, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority.

2. PURPOSE

This report informs Council on the progress of the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail and presents the preferred cycling route alignment.

3. BACKGROUND

On January 27, 2011 Council endorsed the framework for the implementation of the Lake to Lake project

The approved framework consists of a workshop initiative and a proposed work plan for a feasibility design study of the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail.

To provide insight, guidance and advice on the alignment and design aspect of the project, a Technical Advisory Committee for the project was established and comprised of representatives from the nine local municipalities, Conservation Authorities, City of Toronto, York Region Transportation and Community Planning, as well as York Region Public Health and York Regional Police.

The Lake to Lake route will form a key tourist and recreational destination connecting Lake Simcoe and Lake Ontario

York Region's Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan identifies a potential corridor which uses existing and proposed off-road and on-road sections to complete the Lake to Lake route. The Route serves to promote tourism, encourage active lifestyles and improve mobility for cyclists and pedestrians between key destinations such as the beaches along Lake Drive in the Town of Georgina, Fairy Lake in Town of Newmarket and Richmond Green in the Town of Richmond Hill. The facility is focused on recreational and family users with some segments providing commuter connections to transit stops. The Lake to Lake project presents an opportunity to provide a signature project to focus and attract attention to cycling and active living.

The Lake to Lake route will form the north-south backbone for the Region's overall cycling network

The Lake to Lake route will connect local municipalities and communities in the central part of York Region and form the north-south backbone from which the overall cycling network and trail system in the Region will be developed. Other potential routes to the east and west, such as the Humber River Trail in Vaughan, Rouge Park trails in Markham, or the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail in the mid-York area could feed into and connect to the north-south spine as they get developed. These future route connections are conceptually shown in *Council Attachment 1*.

In the south end, the Region's Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan identifies a concept route that connects to the East Don Parklands near Leslie Street and makes use of the existing cycling facilities along the Don River Valley system in the City of Toronto to reach Lake Ontario.

As an inter-Regional scale project, the Lake to Lake route could be part of a future Provincial cycling network that will improve mobility for pedestrians and cyclists across the regional and municipal boundaries.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Preliminary alignments were developed based on the recommendations and information contained in the 2008 Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan

Preliminary route alignments were first developed based on the recommendations and information contained in the 2008 Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan. These preliminary alignments typically follow existing trails and corridors such as the Nokiidaa Trail and Tom Taylor Trail, as well as the Bayview Avenue and Leslie Street corridors in the southern end to connect with the Don River Valley system in the City of Toronto to

reach Lake Ontario. These preliminary alignments were developed to generate discussions and consultation with stakeholders.

Stakeholder consultation helped to identify potential opportunities and constraints in the corridor to be used in the selection of the preferred route

On April 27, 2012 York Region conducted a stakeholder workshop to identify potential opportunities and constraints related to the preliminary alignments. The workshop also provided participants with information on emerging trends in trail design, policy development and marketing considerations. Representatives from the nine local municipalities, York Region Police, Simcoe County, Conservation Authorities, York Region District School Board and York Region departments (Public Health, Transportation and Community Planning) participated in the workshop.

Public outreach was conducted to garner feedback on the preliminary route alignment

Regional staff and the project consultant engaged the public through two informal “drop-in” sessions. One session was held on June 1, 2012 at Hillcrest Mall, Richmond Hill; and a second session was held on June 3, 2012 at the Aurora Street Festival.

The following are some of the comments received at the two public sessions:

- 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;
- 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 waste 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;
- The project should connect with existing and proposed on-road and off-road cycling and trail networks, as well as Conservation Authority lands and the Regional forests;
- Need more bike lanes in business and commercial areas where people work;
- 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 the road.

The Region’s corporate social media pages such as Facebook and Twitter were used to inform the public and other stakeholders about upcoming Open Houses, events and progress on the project. Approximately 98 percent of the 90 people that completed the

online questionnaire respondents either strongly agree or agree with the development of the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail. An off-road multi-use trail and a paved surface with way-finding signage, parking and wheelchair accessibility were some key components identified for the Trail.

A preferred route has been identified that connects key destinations and cultural heritage areas in York Region

The key selection criteria used to identify the preferred route include:

- Links existing pathway and cycling networks with options to develop a route that is off-road wherever possible so that it appeals to the widest range of users;
- Connects important community destinations and tourist attractions;
- Provides connections to intermodal hubs;
- Provides access to area and services needed by route users (e.g. food, lodging, washrooms, equipment parts and repair, etc.);
- Overcomes/crosses major barriers including major highways and major roads, watercourses, and railways;
- Forms part of a north-south spine in the Regional network that creates opportunities for local municipal and neighbourhood routes to link with the spine;
- Takes advantage of scenic views and vistas; and
- Provides a meaningful user experience.

Council Attachment 2 illustrates the preferred route identified in the study process and will be assessed in more detail at the next stage of the project.

The preferred alignment cover parts of the Region including the following destinations and areas:

- Jackson's Point and Lake Drive in the Town of Georgina;
- Nokiidaa Trail and Holland River area in the Town of East Gwillimbury;
- Tom Taylor Trail and Fairy Lake area in the Town of Newmarket;
- Nokiidaa Trail and Sheppard's Bush area in the Town of Aurora;
- Lake Wilcox and the new Oak Ridges Community Centre, Richmond Green, and Beaver Creek Business Park in the Town of Richmond Hill; and
- Commerce Valley and German Mills areas in the City of Markham.

The total length of the preferred Lake to Lake Route and Walking Trail alignment within York Region is approximately 90 kilometres. Approximately 30 kilometres of it will be located off-road and 30 kilometres will be on-road. The type of bike facility on the remaining York Region portion of the route is a combination of off and on-road facilities and will be detailed in the next phase of the study.

Regional staff are working collaboratively with the City of Toronto to provide cycling connections across Steeles Avenue

City of Toronto and York Region staff are working collaboratively to seek opportunities to provide seamless cycling connectivity between the Region and City. The Lake-to-Lake cycling route is a key project that City staff supports and is involved through the study Technical Advisory Committee.

Council Attachment 3 illustrate the preferred route alignment including the portion within the City of Toronto. The route in Toronto primarily follows the East Don River parkland south towards Lake Ontario.

The next phase of the Lake to Lake Study will determine the feasibility and design of the preferred route

A feasibility assessment of the preferred cycling route will be undertaken as the project progresses. Design solutions and design alternatives will be evaluated and confirmed with the Technical Advisory Committee. Segments with design challenges will also be assessed in detail as part of this stage or in coordination with current capital projects. For example, Bayview Avenue north of Elgin Mills Road is currently under design for a road improvement capital project. The segment of Bayview Avenue between 19th Avenue and Stouffville Road will be a transition point between a rural cross-section and an urban cross-section that will pose some design challenges. Property implications are being assessed and appropriate designs are being considered in order to accommodate a segregated cycling facility.

Typical cross-sections and functional design guidelines will be developed for the route. This study is scheduled to be completed by early Spring 2013.

Link to Key Council-approved Plans

This report supports the following plans and priority areas:

2011-2015 Strategic Plan:

- Continue to partner with all levels of government to facilitate the delivery of environmentally-sustainable infrastructure.
- Improve mobility for users on Regional transportation corridors.

Vision 2051:

- To promote intermodal transportation system by providing alternative modes of transportation and intermodal links.
- To emphasize healthy communities and sustainability.

Regional Official Plan and Transportation Master Plan Update:

- To promote human health and well-being in York Region, where people can live, work, play and learn in accessible and safe communities.
- To implement and coordinate with local municipalities York Region's Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

All study activities are included in the approved Transportation and Community Planning Services 2012 budget.

This report has no direct financial implications. However, preliminary capital and operating/maintenance cost estimates will be developed as part of this project as will an implementation strategy where the roles and responsibilities of various agencies including York Region will be identified.

The project will be constructed in sections by the Region or the local municipalities depending on the jurisdiction. The Region currently has allocated \$500,000 per year in the Capital Budget for the construction of pedestrian and cycling facilities. Also, some of the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail sections that are within Regional rights-of-way will be constructed as part of capital projects in the 10-year Road Construction Program.

The off-road component of the Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail can be in the form of multi-use trails. Preliminary cost estimates in the 2008 Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan suggests unit prices of \$110,000 per kilometer for capital construction and \$2,000 per kilometer per year for maintenance costs for multi-use trails.

A final progress report to Regional Council in Spring 2013 will present the functional design and the implementation strategy of the Lake to Lake Route.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Collaboration with local municipalities and other stakeholders on the Lake to Lake Route alignment and functional designs is important since most of the links are anticipated to fall under local jurisdictions

In many instances, the proposed Lake to Lake route alignment is formed by local municipal cycling facilities such as the Tom Taylor Trail in Newmarket and the Nokiidaa Trail in East Gwillimbury and Aurora. As such, local municipal staff are engaged in the project as full partners.

Impacts on local municipal infrastructure and potential maintenance issues will be identified in the next phase of the study.

7. CONCLUSION

The Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail will play an important role in forming a north-south spine in the Region's overall cycling network and trail system. The preferred route alignment has been identified with input from public and stakeholder consultations.

The preferred route connects key destinations and natural heritage areas in York Region from the Lake Simcoe waterfront area through the City of Toronto to the shores of Lake Ontario.

The next phase of the study will include feasibility assessments and identifying preliminary cost estimates and an implementation strategy. Agency roles and responsibilities and construction schedule will be detailed in the implementation strategy. The Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail study is scheduled for completion by Spring 2013 and a final progress report will be presented to Regional Council.

For more information on this report, please contact Richard Hui, Manager, Transportation Planning at Ext. 1578.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The three attachments referred to in this clause are attached to this report.)

Lake to Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail

Presentation to Transportation
Services Committee

Richard Hui
October 3, 2012

Overview

- ❑ Background Information
- ❑ Stakeholder Consultation
- ❑ Preliminary Route Alignment
- ❑ Collaboration with the City of Toronto
- ❑ Financial Implications
- ❑ Next Steps

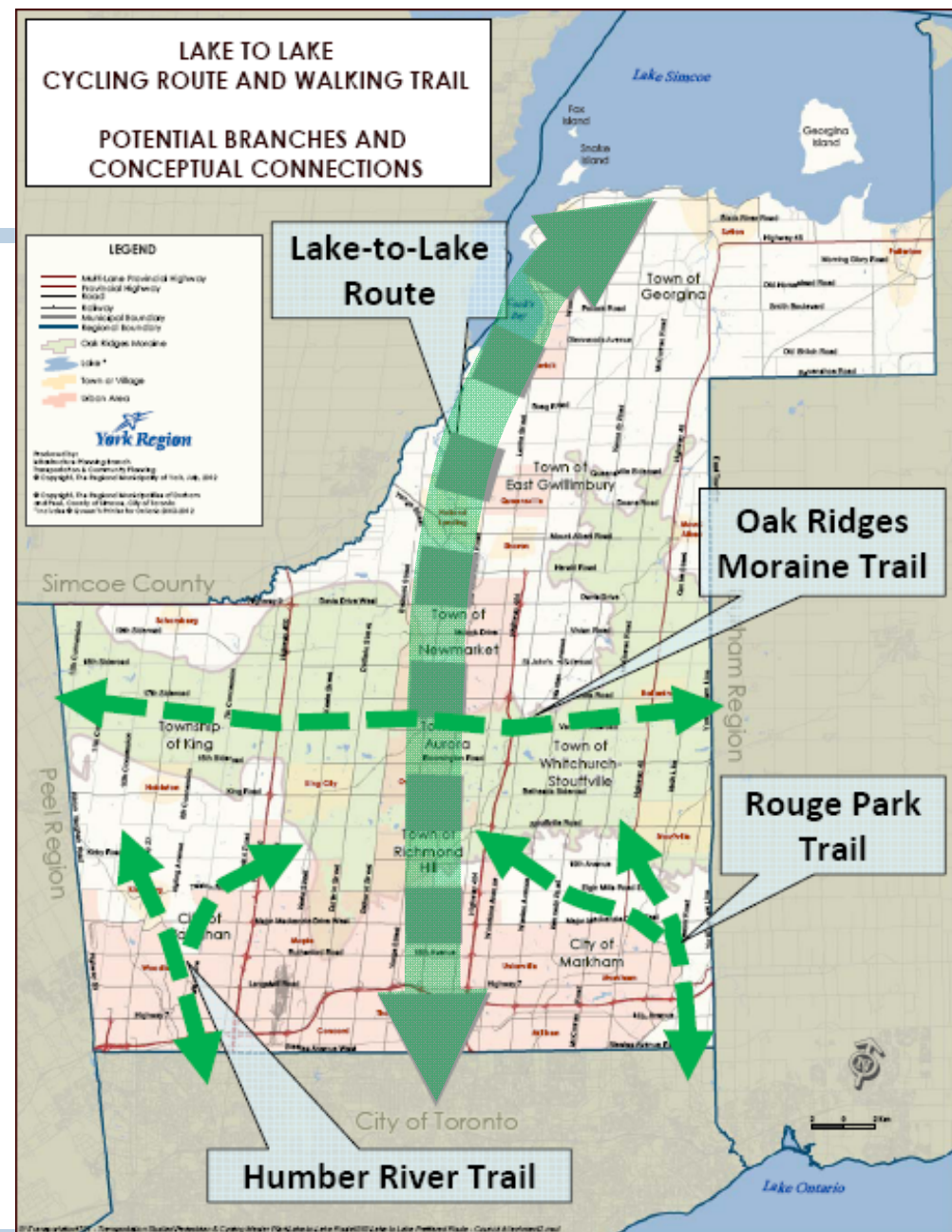
Background

- ❑ Lake to Lake Route identified in Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan (2008)
- ❑ The Lake to Lake Route will form the north-south backbone for the Region's overall cycling network
- ❑ In 2011, Regional Council endorsed a framework for the implementation of the Lake to Lake Route project

Extensive Stakeholder Consultation

- ❑ Stakeholder Workshop – April 27, 2012
- ❑ 1st Public Information Centres
 - ❑ Hillcrest Mall in Richmond Hill – June 1, 2012
 - ❑ Aurora Street Festival - June 3, 2012
- ❑ On-line Questionnaire
- ❑ Social Media

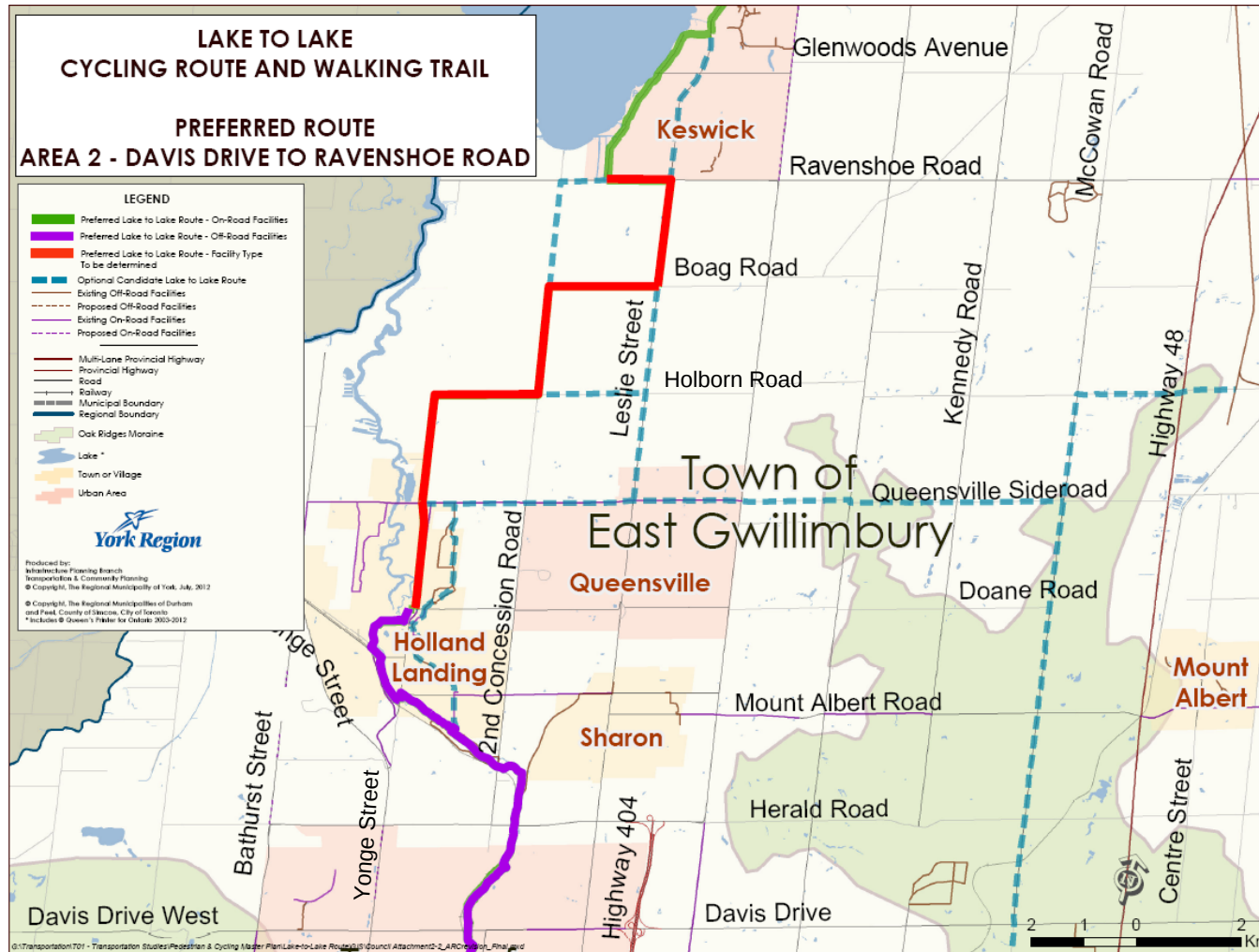
Potential Branches and Conceptual Connections



Area 1 – Lake Simcoe to Ravenshoe Rd



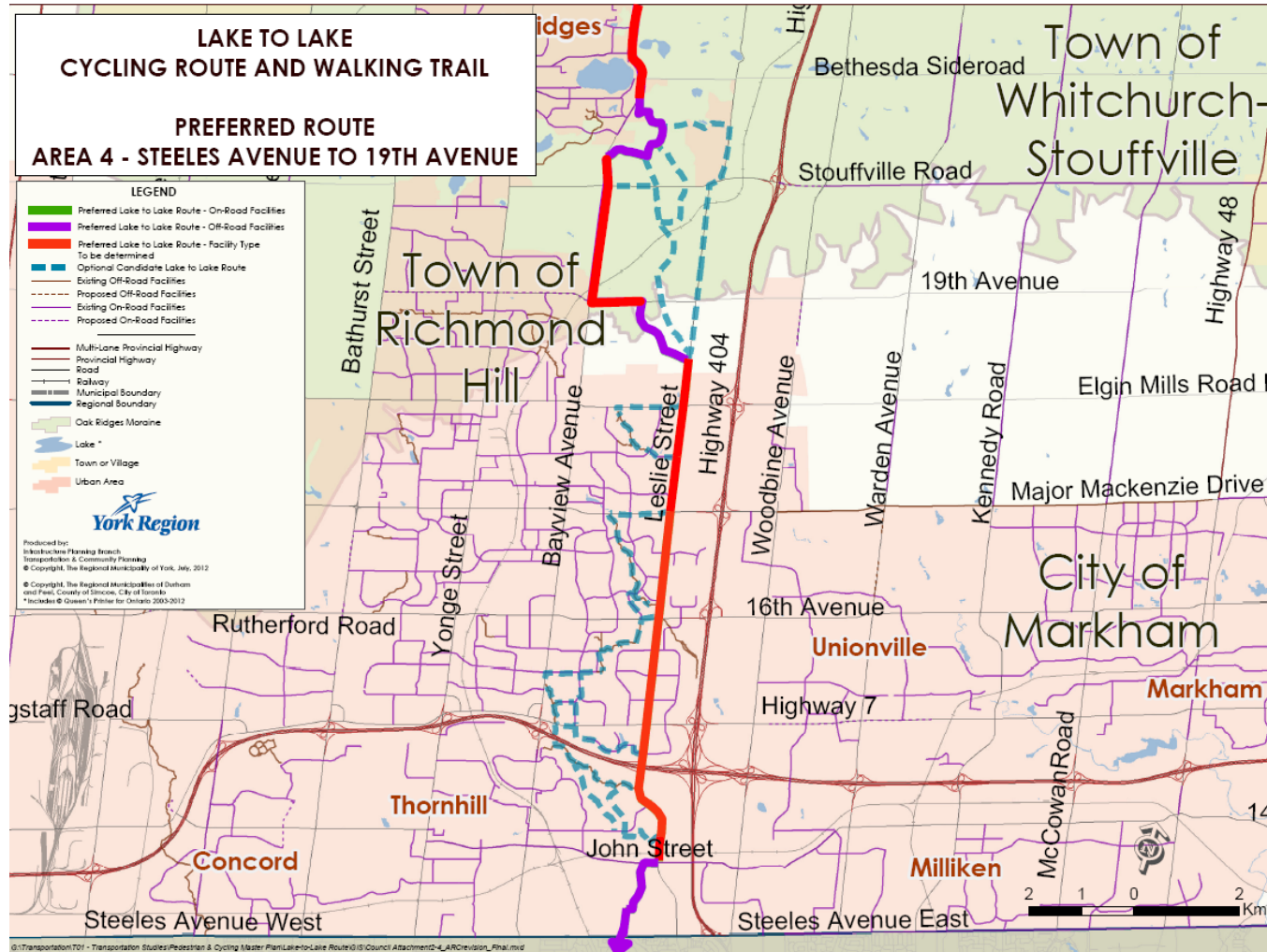
Area 2 – Ravenshoe Road to Davis Drive



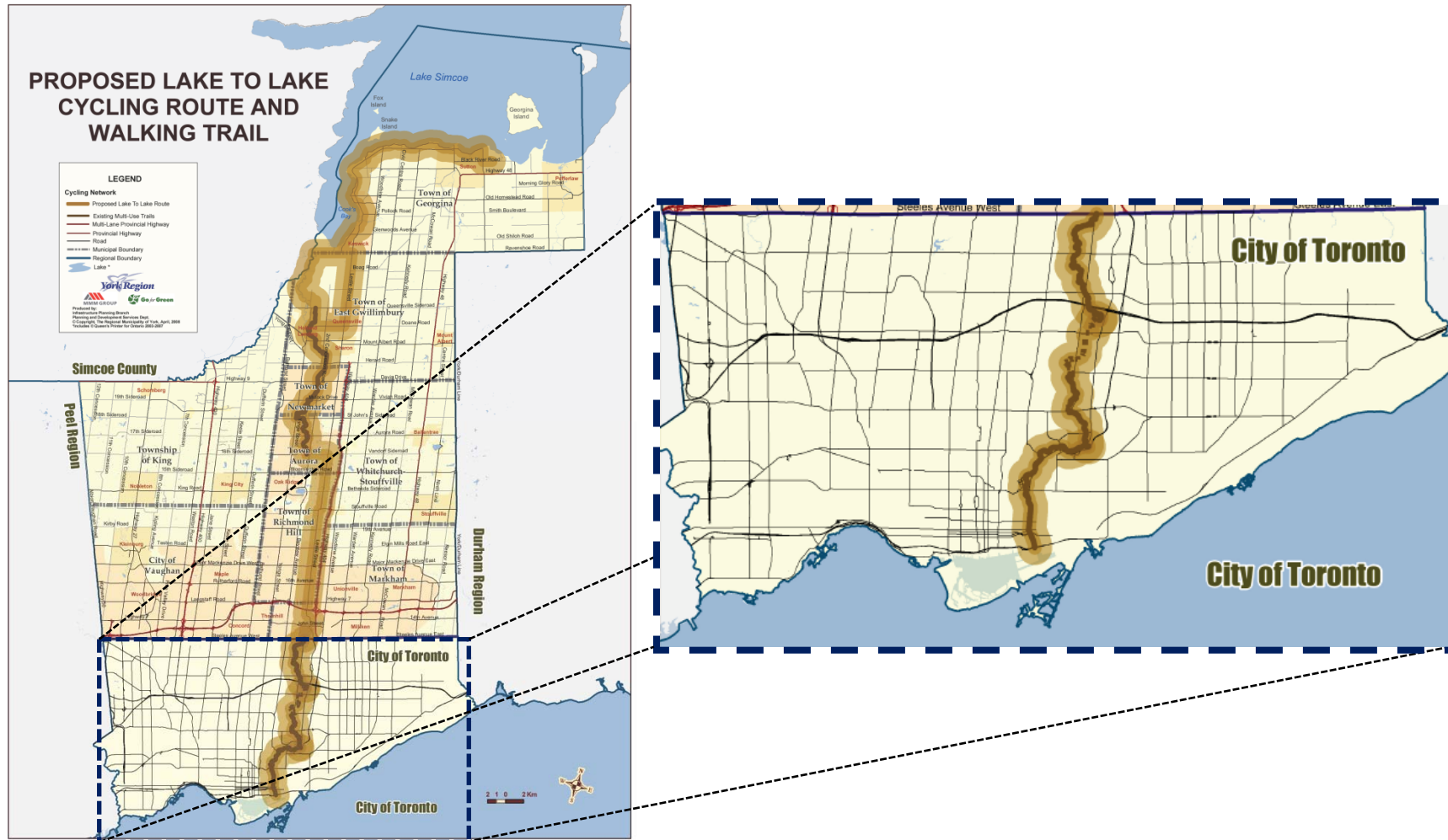
Area 3 – Davis Drive to 19th Avenue



Area 4 – 19th Avenue to Steeles Avenue



Collaboration with the City of Toronto



Financial Implications

- ❑ Capital and maintenance cost estimates will be developed
- ❑ \$500,000 allocated annually in the 10-year Capital Budget
- ❑ Another \$500,000 available annually in the Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program

Next Steps

- ❑ Conceptual/Functional design and costing
 - ❑ Feasibility Assessment
 - ❑ Capital and operating/maintenance costs
- ❑ Public and Stakeholders consultation
- ❑ Implementation Strategy and reporting
 - ❑ Potential funding sources
 - ❑ Roles/responsibilities
 - ❑ Branding/signage

LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL

POTENTIAL BRANCHES AND CONCEPTUAL CONNECTIONS

LEGEND

- Multi-Lane Provincial Highway
- Provincial Highway
- Road
- Railway
- Municipal Boundary
- Regional Boundary
- Oak Ridges Moraine
- Lake *
- Town or Village
- Urban Area



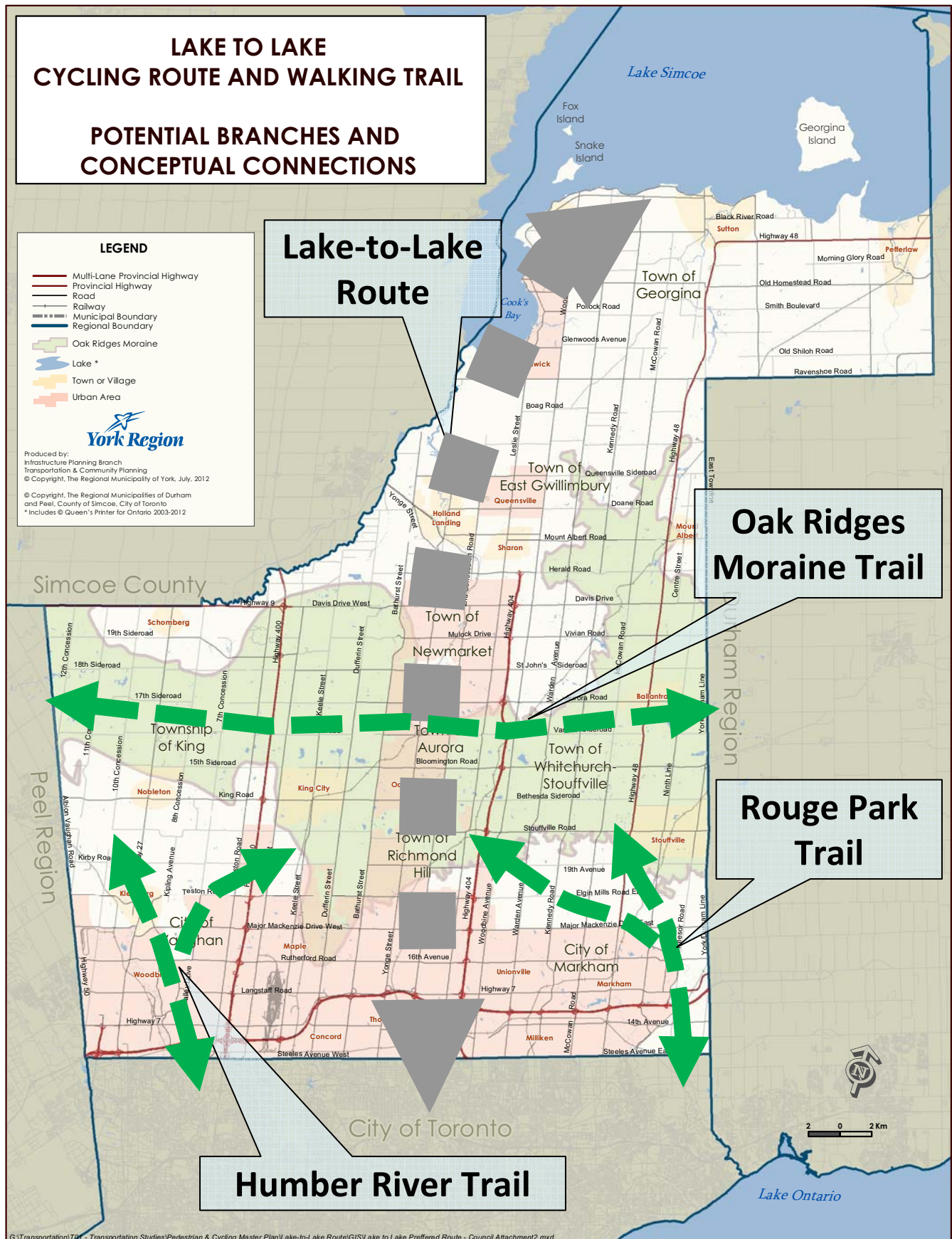
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Lake-to-Lake Route

Oak Ridges Moraine Trail

Rouge Park Trail

Humber River Trail



LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL PREFERRED ROUTE

LEGEND

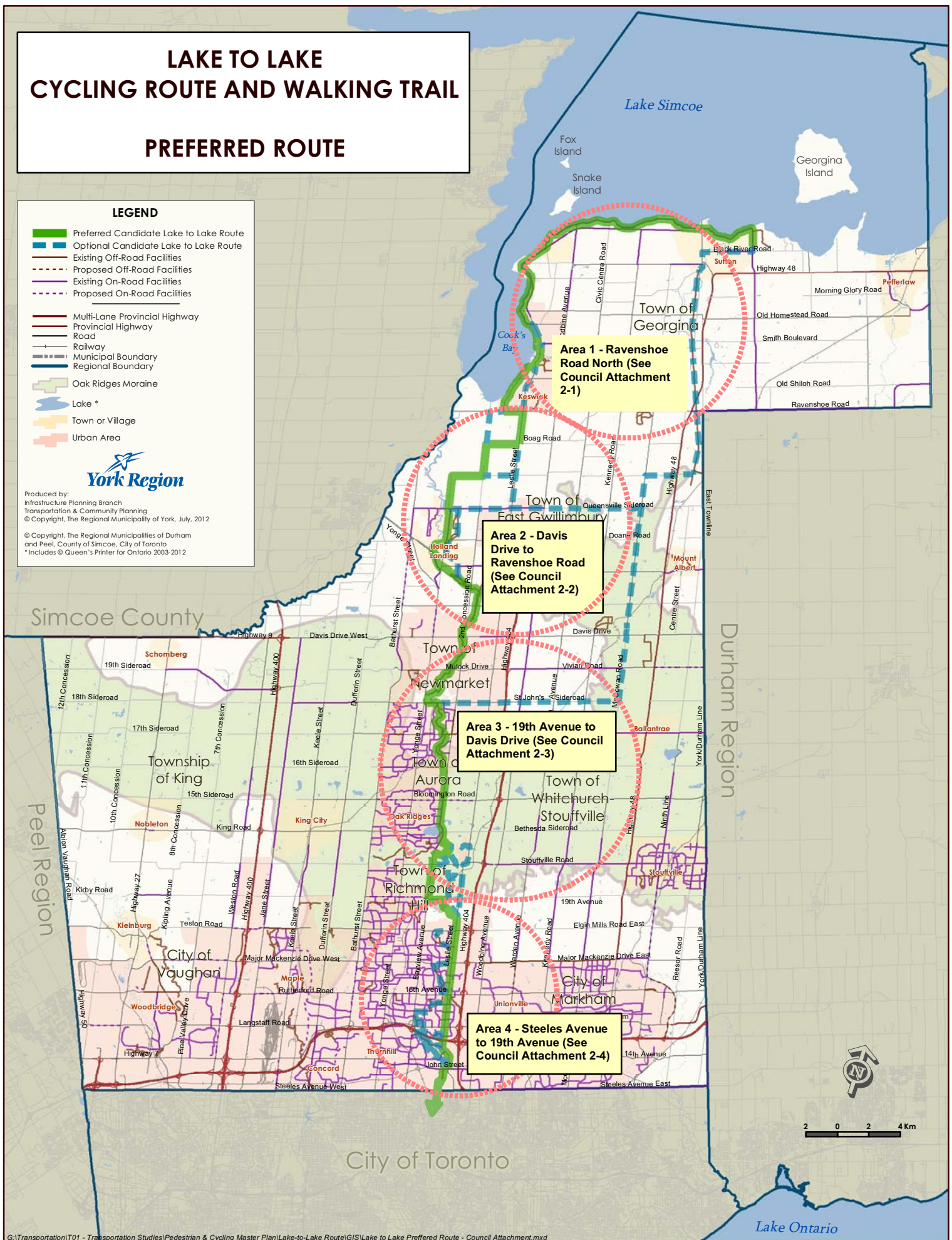
- Preferred Candidate Lake to Lake Route
- Optional Candidate Lake to Lake Route
- Existing Off-Road Facilities
- - - Proposed Off-Road Facilities
- Existing On-Road Facilities
- - - Proposed On-Road Facilities

- Multi-Lane Provincial Highway
- Provincial Highway
- Road
- Railway
- - - Municipal Boundary
- - - Regional Boundary
- Oak Ridges Moraine
- Lake *
- Town or Village
- Urban Area



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LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL

PREFERRED ROUTE AREA 1 - RAVENSHOE ROAD NORTH

LEGEND

- Preferred Lake to Lake Route - On-Road Facilities
- Preferred Lake to Lake Route - Off-Road Facilities
- Preferred Lake to Lake Route - Facility Type To be determined
- - - Optional Candidate Lake to Lake Route
- Existing Off-Road Facilities
- - - Proposed Off-Road Facilities
- Existing On-Road Facilities
- - - Proposed On-Road Facilities

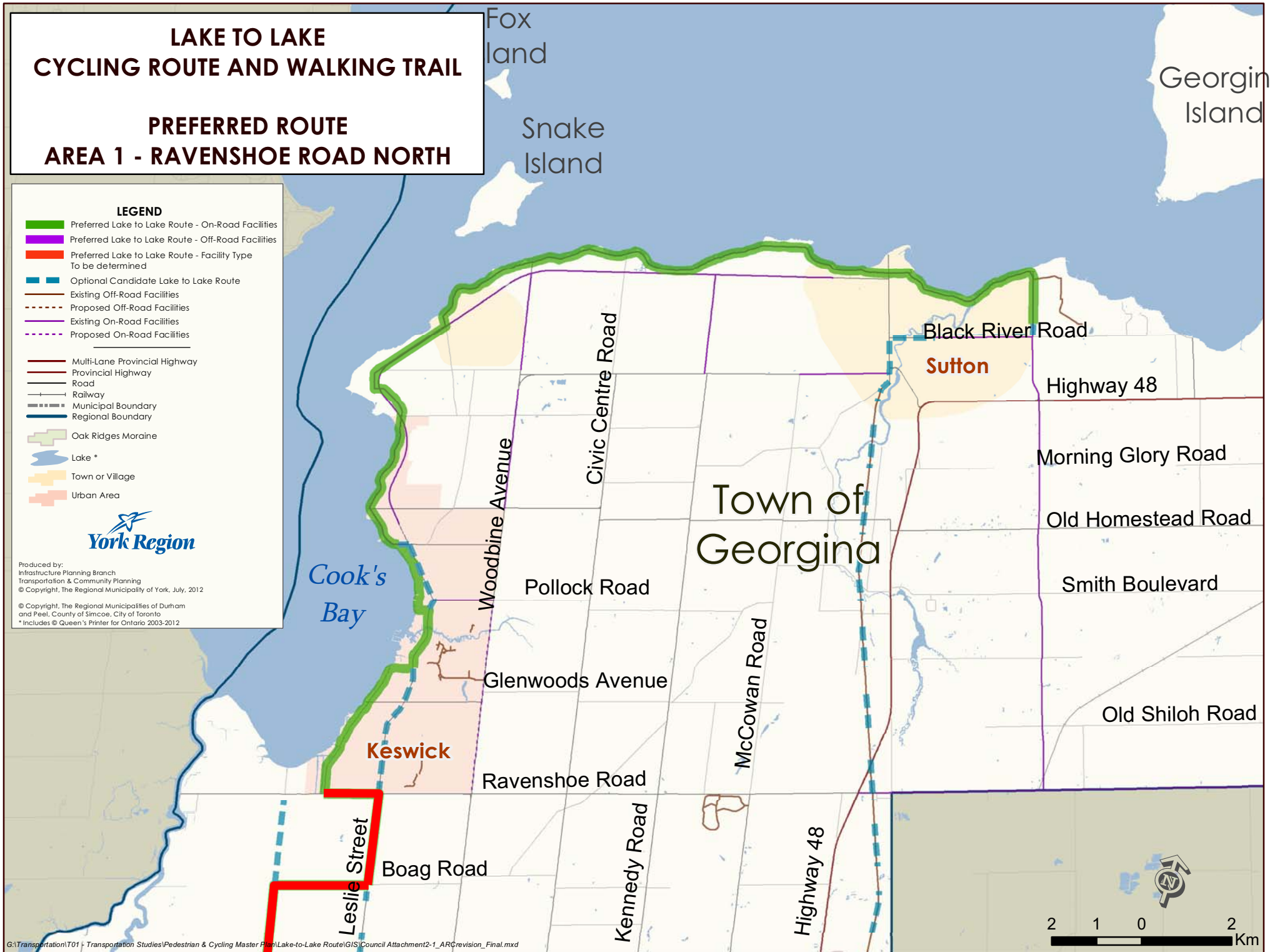
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- Oak Ridges Moraine
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LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL

PREFERRED ROUTE AREA 2 - DAVIS DRIVE TO RAVENSHOE ROAD

LEGEND

- Preferred Lake to Lake Route - On-Road Facilities
- Preferred Lake to Lake Route - Off-Road Facilities
- Preferred Lake to Lake Route - Facility Type To be determined
- - - Optional Candidate Lake to Lake Route
- Existing Off-Road Facilities
- - - Proposed Off-Road Facilities
- Existing On-Road Facilities
- - - Proposed On-Road Facilities

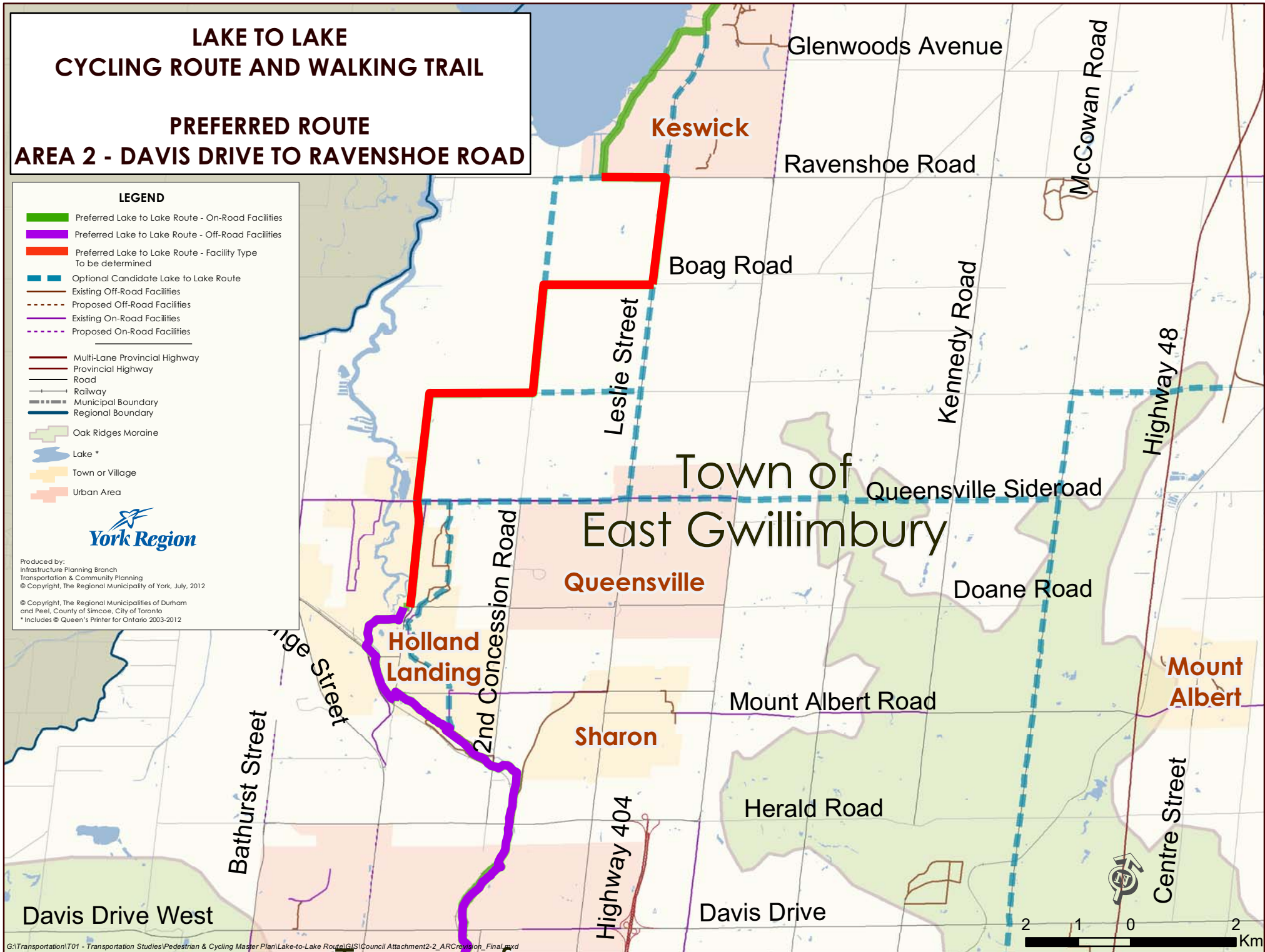
- Multi-Lane Provincial Highway
- Provincial Highway
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- Oak Ridges Moraine
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- Town or Village
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LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL

PREFERRED ROUTE AREA 3 - 19TH AVENUE TO DAVIS DRIVE

LEGEND

- Preferred Lake to Lake Route - On-Road Facilities
- Preferred Lake to Lake Route - Off-Road Facilities
- Preferred Lake to Lake Route - Facility Type To be determined
- - - Optional Candidate Lake to Lake Route
- Existing Off-Road Facilities
- - - Proposed Off-Road Facilities
- Existing On-Road Facilities
- - - Proposed On-Road Facilities

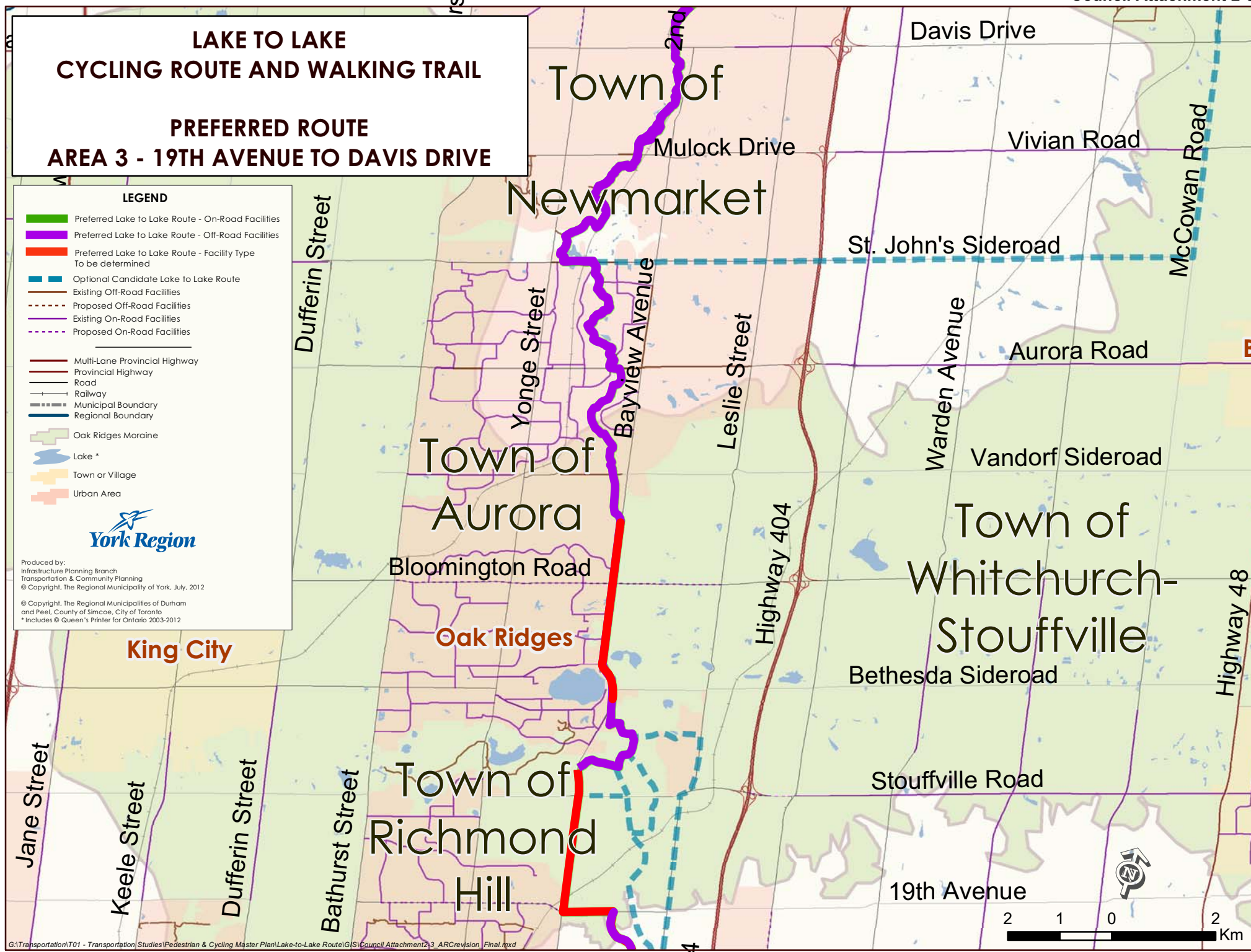
- Multi-Lane Provincial Highway
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LAKE TO LAKE CYCLING ROUTE AND WALKING TRAIL

PREFERRED ROUTE AREA 4 - STEELES AVENUE TO 19TH AVENUE

LEGEND

- Preferred Lake to Lake Route - On-Road Facilities
- Preferred Lake to Lake Route - Off-Road Facilities
- Preferred Lake to Lake Route - Facility Type To be determined
- - - Optional Candidate Lake to Lake Route
- Existing Off-Road Facilities
- - - Proposed Off-Road Facilities
- Existing On-Road Facilities
- - - Proposed On-Road Facilities

- Multi-Lane Provincial Highway
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- - - Municipal Boundary
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