



Report of the Commissioner of Public Works

Trans Canada Trail Expansion Into York Region

1. Recommendations

1. Council endorse inclusion of the Lake to Lake Route and the South York Greenway as part of the Trans Canada Trail.
2. Council authorize The Regional Municipality of York to act as interim Trail Operator for the application to the Trans Canada Trail – Trail Funding Program (Roadway Conversion and Improvement Program and Network Extension Program Stream).
3. Council authorize the Commissioner of Public Works to enter into funding agreements with Trans Canada Trail on business terms satisfactory to the Commissioner of Public Works and on legal terms that are agreeable to the Regional Solicitor.
4. The Regional Clerk circulate this report to the Clerks of the local municipalities and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

2. Purpose

This report seeks Council endorsement to include the Lake to Lake Route and the South York Greenway as part of the Trans Canada Trail. The report also seeks Council authorization to allow The Regional Municipality of York to act as the interim Trail Operator for the purposes of Trans Canada Trail – Trail Funding Program – Roadway Conversion and Improvement Program and Network Extension Program Stream (Trail Funding Program) application submission, registration, and release of funds.

Key Points:

- The Lake to Lake Route provides a north-south active transportation route, connecting through the Towns of Georgina, East Gwillimbury, Newmarket, Aurora, and the Cities of Richmond Hill and Markham, illustrated in Appendix A

- The South York Greenway extends from eastern to western boundaries of York Region in the south, from Highway 50 to York-Durham Line, within the vicinity of Highway 407/Hydro Corridor lands, forming a major active transportation route connecting the Cities of Markham, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan, as illustrated in Appendix B
- Expanding the Trans Canada Trail into York Region elevates profile for trails in York Region, promoting walking, cycling and other forms of sustainable transportation and connecting across municipal boundaries
- Trans Canada Trail, through their Trail Funding Program, conditionally awarded \$100,000 to progress route design and construction for the Lake to Lake Route and the South York Greenway (\$50,000 each), subject to the execution of funding agreements yet to be negotiated
- Trans Canada Trail designation allows local municipal trail operators to qualify for other streams of the Trail Funding Program which, for example, fund trail maintenance
- Registering two Regional trails supports the Region's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan of Economic Vitality by promoting sustainable transportation and tourism

3. Background

The Trans Canada Trail has national significance, providing recreational active transportation connections across the country

The Trans Canada Trail forms the largest recreational trail in the world, spanning over 28,000 kilometres on land and water. It passes through 15,000 rural, urban, and Indigenous communities across every province and territory in Canada and has recently expanded to connect into the United States. Within the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, the Trans Canada Trail currently extends through Peel and Durham Regions and the City of Toronto. The Trans Canada Trail currently does not pass through York Region.

The Lake to Lake Route and the South York Greenway have been approved in principle by Trans Canada Trail to form part of their network

Two trails within York Region, the Lake to Lake Route and the South York Greenway, have been approved in principle by Trans Canada Trail for inclusion as part of the larger network.

The Lake to Lake Route will comprise 92 kilometres of active transportation routes spanning north-south across the Region, ultimately connecting Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario in the City of Toronto. The route travels through Towns of Georgina, East Gwillimbury, Newmarket, Aurora, and Cities of Markham and Richmond Hill.

The South York Greenway, leveraging underused lands parallel to Highway 407 and hydro corridor lands, aims to expand the Region’s active transportation network in the south. The route will link major mobility hubs, existing trails, and key destinations from Highway 50 in the west, crossing Cities of Vaughan, Richmond Hill, and Markham to connect with York-Durham Line in the east.

The Lake to Lake Route and the South York Greenway are key active transportation initiatives in the Region’s Transportation Master Plan

In the Region’s [Transportation Master Plan](#), focus area F.4 aims to *Reduce car travel*, by encouraging more active and eco-friendly travel options, especially during rush hours. The Lake to Lake Route and South York Greenway are key initiatives supporting this focus area.

Feasibility studies, identifying preferred route alignments, are complete for both the Lake to Lake Route and the South York Greenway. They included extensive consultation with local municipalities, conservation authorities, regional stakeholders, and the public. The Lake to Lake Trail is within the Region’s right-of-way and would not require access agreements. However, the Region does not own a significant portion of the lands forming the South York Greenway and would require various access agreements with the appropriate provincial agencies, local municipality, and/or utility company.

Through detailed design, staff endeavour to align the route as closely as possible to the preferred route; however, routing may shift due to new opportunities, unidentified constraints, environmental considerations or shifting priorities on regional or local levels brought on by new development. All changes will be completed with consultation and buy-in from local municipal partners. Where appropriate during the detailed design phase, Indigenous communities, and Williams treaty First Nations, with whom York Region shares lands and resources, will be engaged.

4. Analysis

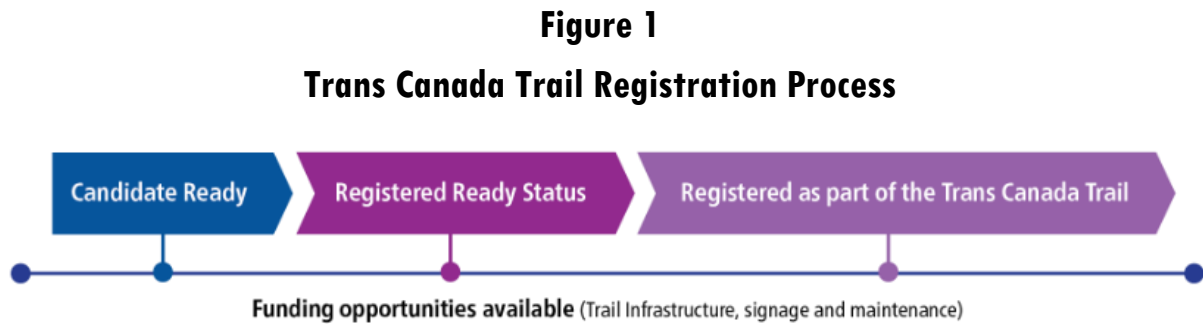
The Lake to Lake Route and the South York Greenway have qualified for funding from Trans Canada Trail’s Trail Funding Program

Regional staff have been working closely with Trans Canada Trail to successfully obtain “candidate ready status” and \$100,000 in funding for both routes (\$50,000 each). Funding must be used by December 2025.

- For the Lake to Lake Route, funding will be applied to construction of a multi-use path along Bayview Avenue, between Bloomington Road and Dariole Drive/Bayview Park Lane, City of Richmond Hill. York Region has worked closely with City of Richmond Hill staff on design and interface with Lake Wilcox area for this project.

- For the South York Greenway, funding will be used to advance an additional route segment into detailed design, enabling the Region to advance construction of more route segments in coming years.

As the Lake to Lake Route is over 85% constructed, it received “registered ready status” making it eligible for additional funding opportunities. Figure 1 summarizes the typical process for trails to be formally established as part of the Trans Canada Trail network.



The Region will act as interim Trail Operator during Trans Canada Trail application, registration, and funding agreement delivery

Establishing the Region as interim Trail Operator allows agreements to be signed and funding released to the Region. This supports design and construction of two major trail routes facilitating inclusion as part of the Trans Canada Trail system.

Through the interim phase, the Regional staff would work closely with local municipal staff ensuring trails are designed and constructed to local municipal specifications including surface material, signage, pavement markings, and other maintenance requirements. The Region would also negotiate the terms and contractual obligations of the funding agreements with Trans Canada Trail so that trails may be transferred to local municipalities once complete for a seamless transition of the Trail Operator.

The Region will be making a financial contribution towards construction of segments of the trails. Upon completion the trails would be transferred to local municipalities along with obligations to comply with Trans Canada Trails’ guidelines for trails that have received funding. Once construction is complete, trails will be transferred to local municipalities to act as Trail Operator, along with financial responsibilities. This approach is consistent with completed trail sections.

The Lake to Lake Route and the South York Greenway supports 2023-2027 Strategic Plan pillar to Foster Economic Prosperity

Trail work supports 2023-2027 Strategic Plan Objective 2: Invest in a safe, effective transportation system that connects people, goods, and services. The Lake to Lake Route and the South York Greenway will expand the Region’s active transportation network, connecting

the Region's trails both north-south and east-west and continues to build new sustainable transportation options in urban areas for residents.

5. Financial Considerations

The \$100,000 funding commitment from Trans Canada Trail towards the Lake to Lake Route (\$50,000) and the South York Greenway (\$50,000) will add to the Region's \$4.4 million capital budget in 2024 and 2025 to advance pedestrian and cycling projects and continue momentum in designing and building two significant trails within the Region. Funding from Trans Canada Trail must be used by December 31, 2025. Sufficient dollars are allocated in 2024 and 2025 Capital budgets through the capital project line used to advance pedestrian and cycling projects to complete works within the funding timeframe.

Staff will continue to pursue additional funding opportunities to expedite completion of these two trails.

6. Local Impact

The Lake to Lake Route and the South York Greenway align with local municipal plans, key priorities, and objectives such as, the City of Markham's Active Transportation Master Plan and City of Vaughan's Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. Expanding active and sustainable modes of transportation continues to be a top priority to ensure residents have travel options available outside a single occupant vehicle.

Staff will continue working closely with local municipalities on establishing trails to be part of the Trans Canada Trail within York Region. This includes future uses, material types and maintenance needs to meet local municipal and community expectations when the Region transfers Trail Operator responsibilities to local municipalities after trail construction.

Trans Canada Trail designation will allow local municipal trail operators to qualify for maintenance funding through Trans Canada Trails' Trail Funding Program. The Region will work with the local municipalities to identify maintenance funding opportunities.

7. Conclusion

This report seeks Council endorsement of the Lake to Lake Route and the South York Greenway to be included as part of the Trans Canada Trail system. If recommendations are approved, the Region will act as interim Trail Operator for Trans Canada Trail application submission and coordination for successful registration of the two trails.

Regional staff will continue to work closely with local municipalities to establish a Trans Canada Trail network in the Region. Establishing a Trans Canada Trail in York Region is anticipated to draw tourism to Regional trails and expand active transportation networks for residents.

For more information on this report, please contact Brian Titherington at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 75109. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.

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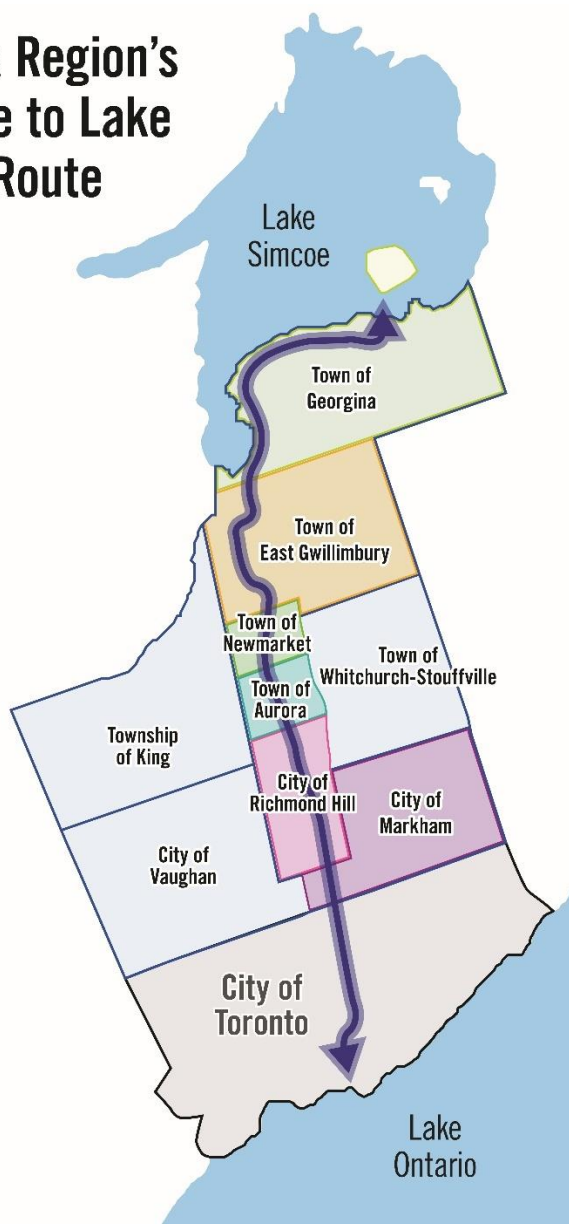
May 27, 2024

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Appendix A – York Region’s Lake to Lake Route

Appendix B – York Region’s South York Greenway

York Region's Lake to Lake Route









York Region's South York Greenway

Corridor Overview and Key Connections

Mobility Hubs

-  Vaughan Metropolitan Centre¹
-  Highway 407 Station²
-  Pioneer Village Station³
-  Future Richmond Hill Centre Terminal⁴
-  Richmond Hill Centre Terminal⁵
-  Future Bridge Station⁶
-  Langstaff GO⁷
-  Unionville GO⁸

Key Connecting Trails

-  Potential Humber Valley Trail Connection
-  Proposed Vaughan Supertrail Connections
-  Lake to Lake Route
-  Markham Centre Trails
-  Rouge Valley Trails
-  Rouge National Urban Park

