

City of Toronto - Downtown SIMCOE STREET



DESCRIPTION

Simcoe Street in Downtown Toronto is an example of how Complete Streets approaches can be integrated into a complex, mature urban context. This pilot project provides a key north-south connection, as it links with recent east-west cycling investments along Richmond St. W and Adelaide St. W. Currently running between Queen St. West to the north and Front St. to the south (with further phases to come), Simcoe St works toward improved active transportation network connections and a more inclusive balance of route options for pedestrians and cyclists.

Simcoe is notable because it is the first project in the Downtown to use a vehicle parking lane as a buffer for a contra-flow bike lane. In order to accommodate for this new facility, a road diet approach was taken, as 3 traffic lanes were converted to 2, including an off-peak parking lane. The public realm has seen offshoot benefits, as pedestrians are increasingly choosing Simcoe as a route since the street improvements.



1,400+

**cyclists per day
within the first
month of installation**

Key Features

+ CONTRA-FLOW BUFFERED BIKE LANES

Increased the flexibility of the facilities together with buffered bike lanes (with bollards) and sharrows in order to accommodate loading, pick-up and drop-off activity

+ CONNECT - GROW - RENEW

The guiding principle for Simcoe Street was to connect network gaps, expanded safe route options and renew existing routes by improving their performance for all users.

+ ABILITY TO TEST INSTANTLY

Large numbers of cyclists in the area allowed for rapid feedback (via intercept surveys) and early stage observation.



CHALLENGES

As the project commissioned a full-scale environmental assessment, the front end of the Simcoe Street work required significant resources. However, this level of background study also yielded benefits as it provided a comprehensive understanding of available options and garnered meaningful buy-in.

Another challenge had to do with the prevalence of construction barriers. The large scale of construction in the Downtown led to complications in terms of how the project was initially received (e.g. bikes diverted off the intended paths). Construction pinch points also made Complete Streets solutions harder to study, as cyclists were sometimes unable to use the facilities as they were designed to be used.