

Margaret Avenue Multi-Use Trail: Frequently Asked Questions & Trail Alignment Options

Background

The Downtown Cycling Grid is a continuous and protected cycling network that connects adjacent neighbourhoods to the downtown. Aiming to make it safer for those who want to bike but don't feel comfortable riding in mixed traffic, the grid includes a combination of separated bike lanes, multi-use trails and neighbourhood bikeways (quiet streets).

One aspect of the grid is the proposal to install a boulevard multi-use trail along Margaret Avenue and Otto Street. This FAQ relates specifically to this trail and street segment of the grid. For more information on the full proposal for the Downtown Cycling Grid, please visit <https://www.engagewr.ca/downtown-cycling-grid>.

A **boulevard multi-use trail** provides two-way travel for both pedestrians and cyclists, in a shared space in the boulevard.



Common questions

Why is a boulevard multi-use trail proposed for Margaret and Otto?

The following factors went into this decision:

- Maintain the existing grass boulevard, as required by the Heritage plan for Margaret Avenue
- Avoid impacting existing GRT transit route #4
- Avoid any loss of on-street parking
- Minimize disruption to existing vehicle traffic
- Avoid impacting an enhanced pedestrian streetscape proposed through Avenue M (now cancelled)
- Minimize disruptions to Centre in the Square pedestrian and vehicle access

Staff considered bidirectional separated bike lanes (similar to what is proposed elsewhere in the Downtown Cycling Grid), but ruled them out due to these negative impacts: loss of all on-street parking, significant increase in capital costs, and the one-way street conversion would have required GRT route #4 to be realigned and caused significant disruption to Centre in the Square access.

Why is the trail proposed on the south side of the street?

The following factors went into this decision:

- Avoid impacting Centre in the Square entrance on Otto Street
- Avoid impacting an enhanced pedestrian streetscape proposed through Avenue M (now cancelled)
- Facilitate a safer crossing of Margaret Avenue onto Breithaupt Street, for access to the Spur Line Trail. While not part of the scope of this project, a future phase could see unidirectional bike lanes redesigned to bidirectional bike lanes for a safer connection to Breithaupt and the Spur Line Trail.
- Reduced capital costs compared to relocating hydro poles on the north side.

Staff acknowledge that the cancellation of Avenue M is a significant influence on this decision and as a result, have reevaluated the available options. Please review below.

Will boulevards be lost to accommodate the multi-use trail?

No, grass boulevards will be maintained, in order to meet heritage requirements.

Will there be tree loss?

Staff are still evaluating potential tree loss, which will depend on the final placement of the trail.



Will it be safe and comfortable for pedestrians to share the multi-use trail with cyclists?

The proposed trail would function similar to many other shared trails in the city, such as the Spur Line Trail. A yellow centre line helps to distinguish path of travel. Cyclists pass only when safe to do so and yield to pedestrians at all times.

Will homeowners be expected to clear the multi-use trail of snow and ice?

No, city staff would maintain the trail, to the same standard as other multi-use trails in the city.

Will the aesthetics of the multi-use trail fit into the heritage district?

Yes, as long as the grass boulevard is maintained, the heritage requirements are met. There is no distinction in the heritage plan between a concrete sidewalk or asphalt trail.

Will cyclists coming from Frederick be able to safely cross Margaret to access the Spur Line Trail?

There are currently no plans to upgrade the existing bike lanes on Margaret, but staff have heard residents requesting a better crossing and connection to Spur Line Trail and will evaluate options in the future.

Will front yards be shortened to accommodate the multi-use trail? If so, which ones and by what extent?

Yes, the properties between 9 and 55 Margaret, and 108 Queen, will be impacted. By squeezing the width of the road, staff propose minimizing this impact by 1 m from existing edge of sidewalk. To assess the potential impact on your front yard, measure 1 m from the current edge of sidewalk on the property side, and that is how far the new multi-use trail would extend towards private property.

Impacts to front yards can be eliminated between Victoria Street and 43 Margaret and between 9 Margaret and 109 Queen by narrowing the roadway and building the trail towards the road. See below the available options to minimize front yard impacts between 41 – 11 Margaret.

Will cars coming from Queen be permitted to turn left at Victoria?

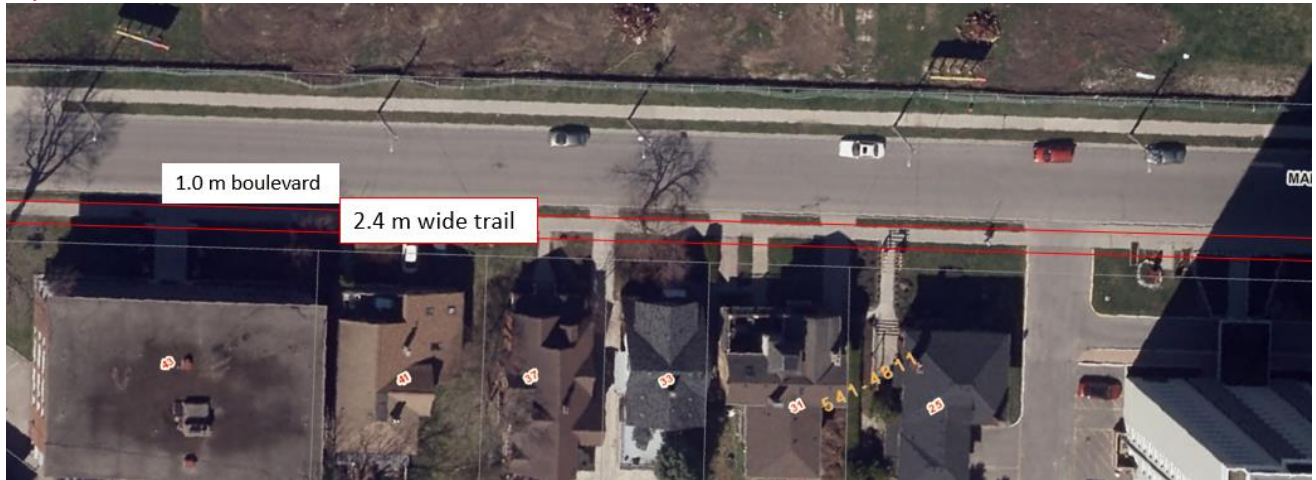
Yes. However, the current dedicated left turn lane would be removed.

Options under consideration

After hearing resident feedback thus far, city staff are now considering three options of trail alignment, and welcome your input. All three options will avoid front yard and tree loss between Victoria Street - 43 Margaret and between 9 Margaret - 109 Queen by narrowing the roadway and building the trail towards the road. However, the 3 options have a different approach for the trail alignment in front of 41 – 11 Margaret due to the additional consideration of existing on-street parking.



Option A: 2.4 m width trail on south side



Pros	Cons
Keep existing curb lines	Trail extends 0.9 m towards private property from existing edge of sidewalk for 11-41 Margaret
Keep parking	Loss of 6-8 trees plus shrubs
Consistent bike connectivity with Maynard/Young contraflow, Spur Line Trail and Otto Street	Shortened driveways
	Absolute minimum trail width is less comfortable for sharing between cyclists and pedestrians



Option B: 3.0 m trail on south side (no parking)



Pros	Cons
No encroachment towards private property	Loss of all on-street parking
Minimize tree loss (1 tree lost, 3-4 partial root damage)	
Consistent bike connectivity with Maynard/Young contraflow, Spur Line Trail and Otto Street	



Option C: 3.0 m trail on north side



Pros	Cons
Keep current curb lines	Less consistent cycling connections with Maynard/Young contraflow, Spur Line and Otto. Extra crossings required at Maynard, Victoria and Queen.
No loss of trees	Removal of GRT bus shelter at Queen Street
Keep parking	

Staff contact

Please share your preferred option and any further questions or comments with city staff. The public consultation phase for this project ends on November 11, so please be in touch before then so we can consider your feedback in time for a staff report to City Council in December. Thank you.

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