

Western's Open Space Strategy – Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is Western's Open Space Strategy?

Western's Open Space Strategy compliments the [2015 Campus Master Plan](#), providing a cohesive strategy for enhancing Western's open spaces. The Open Space Strategy will build on the natural beauty of Western's campus and legacy of landscape stewardship to deliver a safe and beautiful campus that will foster learning and promote Western as a destination of choice for world class education and research.

Q. What initiatives in the Open Space Strategy are considered priorities?

Western's Open Space Strategy puts a priority on pedestrians, accommodating bus rapid transit and reducing cut-through traffic while also improving accessibility and providing more beautiful and useable outdoor spaces. A few projects that will happen in the short-term include, improvements to the landscape and areas currently used for parking around University College and the Physics and Astronomy Building, and improvements to the front of University College. In the next few years, improvements will be made to the the Chemistry parking lot entrance, the walkway between Somerville House and Lawson Hall and the Talbot College/Music Building walkway – among others.

Q. What are Western's plans for enhancing pedestrian safety on campus?

Western is committed to enhancing the safety of pedestrians on our campus. The Open Space Strategy sets out an approach that will improve campus walkways and lighting. In some cases, walkways may be relocated away from car traffic. A long-term strategy will be to create a pedestrian-priority campus core, by greatly reducing car traffic on campus streets. This will be phased in over a number of years, with the possible addition of bus rapid transit providing a pivot point for implementation. The university recognizes that accommodations will need to be made for emergency and service vehicles and community access to certain buildings on campus.

Q. How will traffic reduction measures affect access to buildings such as Delaware Hall, Talbot College, medical clinics and the libraries?

Planning of these measures are in a very early stage. The university recognizes that in implementing a traffic reduction strategy, accommodations will need to be made for service vehicles and community access to certain buildings on campus. There are a range of options on the table for future planning discussions. These include coordinating deliveries and garbage pick-up during off-hours, allowing vehicle access to certain areas based on time-of-day or day of year, or special events or differentiating campus community traffic from cut-through traffic via a pass system.

Q. How will the City of London's plans to bring BRT through campus affect Western's plans?

Western has been in talks with the City of London regarding its proposal to route bus rapid transit through campus. This project would integrate with Western's plans to reduce traffic on campus. Bringing BRT from Richmond St. to Western Road would require that the University Drive bridge be rebuilt to accommodate BRT, pedestrians and bike traffic. It would therefore be closed to car traffic, with accommodations made for emergency and service vehicles. This would be a major pivot point for Western's wider traffic reduction strategy and other LTC bus routes would also be moved to stops on the edge of campus to eliminate bus traffic in the campus core. BRT would also affect the redevelopment of Alumni Circle into an integrated transit and pedestrian-priority area with added outdoor gathering space for the campus community.

Q. Will access to the University Drive bridge change?

Yes, over time, Western will be reducing traffic in the campus core. Accommodating BRT on campus from Richmond St. to Western Road would require that the University Drive bridge be rebuilt to accommodate BRT, pedestrians and bike traffic. It would therefore be closed to car traffic. Accommodations will need to be made for emergency and service vehicles and community access to certain buildings on campus. There are a range of options on the table for future planning discussions. These include coordinating deliveries and garbage pick-up during off-hours, allowing vehicle access to certain areas based on time-of-day or special events or differentiating campus community traffic from cut-through traffic via a pass system.

Q. How will Western approach accessibility/mobility in the context of these projects?

Western is committed to providing an accessible campus. The existing topography creates challenges which limit our ability to provide pedestrians with a fully barrier-free network of travel routes. As projects are planned to enhance Western's outdoor spaces, issues like steep grades, accessible walkways, handrails and seating will be incorporated. As Western works to reduce car traffic from the campus core and move parking to the perimeter, accessible parking in the campus core will be maintained.

Q. How will the Open Space Strategy approach parking infrastructure in the future?

As Western phases in a pedestrian-priority campus core, traffic will be reduced significantly and parking in the core will be moved to perimeter lots (accessible parking will be maintained). This will affect a very small number of spaces, as most of Western's existing parking inventory is in perimeter lots. The addition of bus rapid transit to campus will be a pivot point for Western's wider traffic reduction strategy, which will tie into the parking management strategy. The construction of parking structure(s) on existing lots will be considered, as will programs to incentivise the campus community to utilize public transit and active transportation.

Q. Will Western consider active transportation infrastructure in its plans?

Western is committed to making campus more user-friendly for those using active transportation. This would include improved cycling routes and bike storage and enhanced pedestrian safety.

Q. How will Western's plans affect woodlots and other natural areas on campus?

Western is committed to preserving and enhancing woodlots, the tree canopy and other natural areas on campus. The sustainability of these areas is key to maintaining Western's beautiful campus. The Open Space Strategy calls for reclamation of some asphalt areas to greenspace, as well as the planting of trees, and removal of invasive species. Efforts will be made to reconnect Western to the amenity provided by the Thames River and Medway Creek. Stewardship of Western's greenspace is important for the health and well-being of the campus community.