

# Fall Evaluation Report

## Victoria Promenade Pilot Project

December 2022  
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## The Victoria Promenade Pilot Project

This report highlights information collected by the City of Edmonton during the fall evaluation period of the Victoria Promenade Pilot Project. The findings from the public engagement activities, together with a technical analysis, have been used to evaluate the outcomes of this pilot project to date and to help identify a path forward.

### Project Overview

This summer, Victoria Promenade was transformed using adaptable infrastructure to make this important active transportation corridor safer and more welcoming and accessible for all ages, modes and abilities.

Prior to the installation of this pilot project, the City of Edmonton's Bike Plan identified Victoria Promenade as a substandard route, which, due to high vehicle volume and speeds, did not accommodate safe active transportation for everybody.

The goal of the 2022/2023 Victoria Promenade Pilot Project was to create a space for people of all ages and abilities to walk, bike, and roll. The transformed space was intended to help everyone access the area safely and more comfortably by:

- (1) Creating a separate space for people to scoot and bike in the bike lanes
- (2) Sidewalk space for people walking and using mobility aids or strollers
- (3) Clearly defining space for motor vehicles
- (4) Slowing vehicles and reducing shortcutting.

### Decision Making Process

Public engagement, technical data, and City Policies, including [The City Plan](#), [The Bike Plan](#), and the [Safe Mobility Strategy](#) have all informed the decision making process for the Victoria Promenade Pilot Project.

The role of the public during this engagement was at the **ADVISE** level on the City of Edmonton's Public Engagement Spectrum, meaning the City invited the public to share their feedback and perspectives on their experiences with the pilot project.

Visit [edmonton.ca/PublicEngagement](https://edmonton.ca/PublicEngagement) for more information on the City's public engagement process.

## Fall Evaluation Approach

In September and October 2022, the City conducted an evaluation of the pilot project to assess the outcomes of the pilot project to date. The evaluation methods included **public engagement** activities and a **technical analysis**.

## Public Engagement Summary

### Public Engagement Approach

Prior to the fall evaluation engagement process, the City conducted engagement with the people who travel and live along Victoria Promenade to inform the project in March and April 2022. That engagement focused on gathering feedback on four proposed options for the installation of the pilot project, and the results were shared in the June 2022 [What We Heard Report](#).

Public engagement as part of the fall evaluation consisted of a survey (digital and paper), intercept (in the field) surveys, an online engagement session, and two in-person drop in sessions. The following section summarises the key findings from the public engagement overall. A fulsome report of findings from individual engagement activities is included in the December 2022 [What We Heard Report](#).

### How We Engaged

A Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) process was followed to better understand the experiences and the diverse needs of Edmontonians. The project team provided a variety of engagement tools and activities to broaden outreach and ensure equitable participation.

The engagement process was supported by a number of communications tactics to enhance public engagement, education, inclusion and participation by residents of Victoria Promenade and beyond.

This public engagement and communications approach resulted in a quadrupling of the number of Victoria Promenade residents that participated in the fall survey when compared to the spring engagement survey.

## Public Engagement Tactics

### Online and Paper Surveys

- 1,503 total completed surveys
- 1,080 online surveys
- 187 paper surveys

The survey was available online from September 21-October 23 and open to the general public through [engaged.edmonton.ca/Victoria-Promenade](https://engaged.edmonton.ca/Victoria-Promenade).

Paper copies of the survey were also made available at the speaker board in front of the Mayflower apartment building on Victoria Promenade and at in-person drop-in sessions to improve the accessibility of engagement.

### Intercept Surveys

- 236 intercept surveys

An Intercept survey is an in-field activity which provides the public, including local residents, with the opportunity to share in the moment feedback. These surveys were conducted along Victoria Promenade over three days, giving the public an opportunity to provide in-person feedback to members of the project team.

### Online and in-person engagement sessions

- 20 attendees at the online public engagement session on Thursday, October 13, 6 - 7:30 p.m.
- Over 140 attendees at the in person drop-in sessions on Saturday, October 15, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. and Friday, October 21, 2 - 5 p.m.

The purpose of the sessions were to give Edmontonians several opportunities to engage digitally and in-person.

## Communications Tactics

### How we encouraged engagement

- 25 sidewalk decals
- 8 posts shared on the City's Facebook and Twitter accounts
- 1,900 postcards delivered to residents in the program area
- Email sent to 1,025 Edmonton Insight Community members

Multiple communications tactics, such as sidewalk decals and resident postcard mail-outs using simple language, were used to encourage the public to participate in the survey.

There were 2,007 visits (with approximately 1,800 unique visitors) to [engaged.edmonton.ca/Victoria-Promenade](https://engaged.edmonton.ca/Victoria-Promenade) over the open engagement period.

## Summary of What We Heard

The following themes summarise the key findings from the fall public engagement. A fulsome report of findings from individual engagement activities is included in the [What We Heard Report](#).

### General Project Feedback

- Overall, people support safe mobility for all modes
- The benefits from the pilot project did not outweigh the concerns raised by residents
- There is general mistrust around the engagement process and the public not feeling heard
- Some attendees felt the engagement tools used prior to the installation (online survey and online meetings) were not accessible to seniors
- Lack of understanding around the role of City Council and the ward's Councillor in the process
- Lack of input from neighbourhood residents and a lack of engagement with City Council
- Victoria Promenade residents should have more say than cyclists, who they thought of as a special interest group

### Access to Homes along the Promenade

Concerns Shared:

- Impact to residents' ability to receive visitors, services, homecare and deliveries due to the removal of loading zone access and parking stalls in front of the buildings
- Flexpost spacing for eastbound bike lane is too tight at the alley and needs to be increased to allow cyclists to enter easily
- Annamoe Mansion (a historic building circa 1914) has no on-site parking and has challenges with moving and loading in particular

Positive Feedback:

- Increased access for people cycling and walking

### Access and Operations for Emergency Services

Concerns Shared:

- The impact on emergency services ability to access and park along Victoria Promenade due to the removal of parking spaces and the relocation of the loading zone in front of the Mayflower building to 118 Street

- Emergency vehicles are parking in the bike lane or blocking traffic along the road.
- Building Fire Department Connections (FDCs) were designed to be accessed from the front of the building, rather than the alley, and some individuals were concerned that had not been considered in the planning for the project

### **Congestion**

#### Concerns Shared:

- Back alleys/delivery zones are now busier and congested
- Vehicles avoiding the Victoria Promenade and using other routes resulting in increased traffic congestion on neighbouring streets
- Traffic blockages on the street lead to unsafe driving by people being blocked in

### **Aesthetics and Placemaking**

#### Concerns Shared:

- There is concern around the aesthetic of the project, which is negatively impacting the character, atmosphere and beauty of the Victoria Promenade
- Reduced vibrancy of the area as fewer visitors are using the Victoria Promenade as a place to meet up and as a walking destination

### **Comfort and Feeling of Safety**

#### Concerns Shared:

- While participants acknowledged the City's intention was to make the area safer for everyone, they noted that the installation has had some unintended consequences for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers
- Crossing the street as a pedestrian, across two bike lanes and a lane of vehicle traffic, feels more dangerous than previous infrastructure
- The potential conflict between vehicles and cyclists, where cars must cross the north side (westbound) bike lane to turn down the side streets or enter parkades
- The infrastructure is a hazard due to the visual clutter and leads to confusion and uncertainty for those travelling along Victoria Promenade, especially at night
- Not being able to park in highly visible and well-lit areas made people feel unsafe
- There is a perception that changes have not reduced the traffic volume or the use of Victoria Promenade as a short-cut to Jasper Avenue

**Positive Feedback:**

- Encourages slower traffic
- Separated barriers act as a buffer from traffic to the sidewalk/slows traffic down, meaning it is safer for pedestrians
- With separation from traffic, people felt safer cycling than with the previous infrastructure
- A few participants thanked the City for filling the potholes
- Increases usage for families with kids

**Misuse of Sidewalks and Bike Lanes****Concerns Shared:**

- Residents indicated that cyclists were not yielding to pedestrians at crosswalks and that they still saw cyclists on sidewalks or riding the wrong way in the bike lane
- Lack of enforcement for people biking and cycling who were not following the rules
- An increase in tension between cyclists and pedestrians

**Positive Feedback:**

- Solves the current problem of westbound bikes using the eastbound lane

**Connections****Concerns Shared:**

- Residents emphasised that upgrades are needed on the adjacent bike network as it's important for bike lanes to be connected to a larger network with similar quality. For example, the 100 Avenue connection between 109 Street and 116 Street is currently missing, and the bike lanes along 121 Street, on the West side of Victoria Promenade are substandard.
- The transition at 116-117 Street, where there is no bike lane and cyclists are directed to use the sidewalk (shared use path), is difficult to access and felt dangerous when walking and cycling

**Livability****Concerns Shared:**

- The lack of parking has negatively impacted the accessibility of Victoria Promenade, especially for individuals with limited mobility, and has resulted in seniors feeling more isolated as visitors stay away
- Concerns about the impact the bike lane may have on their property values
- More people are avoiding the area, and there is a perception that there is less pedestrian traffic and public safety concerns with less people around

**Positive Feedback:**

- Promotes healthy lifestyle and active transportation
- More peaceful/relaxing environment
- Active transportation corridor connection is important
- Families benefit from more protected bike lanes
- Additional bike lanes are essential in the downtown core

**Maintenance and Snow Control****Concerns Shared:**

- Concerns with the City's ability to effectively remove the snow, especially on the sidewalks
- Perceptions exist that snow removal crews will prioritise the bike lanes and this relates to concerns about accessibility for those with limited access
- Additional cost for snow removal
- Concerns with how the infrastructure will function during winter
- Concerns about the cost of the design and maintenance of the installation and the impact on property taxes

**Accessibility****Concerns Shared:**

- Reduced access for seniors, caregivers of seniors, and people living with mobility challenges
- Accessibility for cyclists was prioritized over accessibility for pedestrians with limited mobility
- While the concrete curbs that line the bike lanes do not block any existing crossings, some participants felt they created a barrier for people with walkers or in wheelchairs who are trying to cross the street
- Having to cross the bike lane when being dropped off by a car at the loading bay outside the Fairmont building and the potential for a collision; having to step over the concrete barricade is perceived to be a tripping hazard, especially by those with limited mobility/limited vision
- The new location for the Mayflower loading zone reduces accessibility, as it is a further distance (~30 m) from the front entrance to the building

## Engagement and Decision-Making Process

Concerns Shared:

- Concerns about the lack of engagement with residents living along Victoria Promenade before the pilot project was installed in spring 2022
- Attendees commented that the City should have engaged directly and in person with the residents in the impacted buildings along Victoria Promenade
- People felt that the design of the March/April engagement survey should have included an option to leave the infrastructure as it was prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Level of Satisfaction

The full [What We Heard Report](#) outlines the detailed findings from the engagement activities. Overall, the majority of people who participated in the public engagement process were dissatisfied with the pilot project.

- 61% reported dissatisfaction with the pilot, primarily due to reduced parking and street congestion
- 31% reported satisfaction with the pilot, primarily due to increased cyclist and pedestrian safety, reduced vehicle speeds, and the buffer the bike lanes create between vehicles and people walking

## Ideas and Suggestions for Improvements

Participant suggestions for improvements included:

- Returning the bike lane to its original (pre COVID-19) configuration
- Adding a bi-directional bike lane to the south side of the street in order to maintain parking
- Consider alternative or additional traffic calming measures
- Reassess and make any additional changes in the future Neighbourhood Renewal program
- Increase visitor and long term parking options
- Improve connections and transitions of the existing bike lane at 116 Street
- Improve the aesthetics and placemaking of the area
- Additional signage and education for cyclists and E-Scooter riders

## Who We Heard From

Overall, people who travel by various modes and who live on and off Victoria Promenade participated in the engagement opportunities.

- 38% (487) of online and paper survey respondents said they live directly on Victoria Promenade, 7% (83) said they work directly on Victoria Promenade, and 57% (728) said they do not live directly on Victoria Promenade
- 44% (318) of survey respondents said they live in Oliver, but not directly on Victoria Promenade
- 80% of survey respondents walk, 42% bike, 69% drive, 26% ride as a vehicle passenger, and 16% take a taxi or ride-share
- 31% of survey respondents were in the 55-74 age range, and 30% indicated they were in the 35-54 age range
- 49% of the 143 in-person engagement session attendees live on Victoria Promenade, 22% live in the Oliver neighbourhood, and the remaining participants identified as visitors to Victoria Promenade and live elsewhere in Edmonton

The people who participated in the in-person sessions were passionate about their neighbourhood and many shared that they had also provided input into the engagement process by having completed the survey, took part in an intercept interview and/or attended the online session.

## Additional Sources of Feedback

### Online Summer Feedback Form

An online summer feedback form was launched on [Engaged Edmonton](#) in July 2022, in conjunction with the pilot project installation, to gather early insights on peoples' experiences with the new infrastructure. The form was used to gather the public's feedback on the installation, to understand how people were using the space, what they liked or didn't like about the space and to identify any recurring themes.

The feedback form was available from July 24-September 21, 2022, and a total of 189 responses were received.

Overall, the key themes heard from people who live in Oliver or along Victoria Promenade align with the feedback that was received through the Fall Engagement Sessions, as outlined in this report and in the fulsome [What We Heard Report](#).

In response to the comments and feedback received, the City made several adjustments based on feedback we were receiving including:

- *Signage*: Adjustments were made to improve signage at pedestrian crossings and the transition at 117 Street.
- *Road Condition*: Residents reported concerns about the surface condition of the road. As a result, maintenance to repair cracks and potholes in the asphalt were completed on September 12.
- *Turning vehicles*: Curb design adjustments were made to ensure turning vehicles had as much space as possible to complete their maneuvers.
- *Parking*:
  - Added an additional loading zone on Jasper Avenue, North of the Annamoe building, to help support building access for residents, and
  - Converted parking on Jasper Avenue, immediately East of 121 Street from restricted peak hour parking into unrestricted parking to support residents in the area.
- *Emergency Access*: Prior to implementation, the project team worked with Fire Rescue Services to ensure the design is in accordance with the City's Complete Streets Design and Construction Standards. All emergency access standards for this project were met.
- *Winter maintenance*: The project team worked with the Snow and Ice Control team to confirm that the pilot project would be cleared to the same standards as similar infrastructure throughout the City of Edmonton.

## Petition From Residents

A group of residents from Victoria Promenade submitted a petition to the City of Edmonton in the summer of 2022. This petition had approximately 580 names and signatures of people who were opposed to the pilot project. The petition was distributed to at least 14 buildings on or near Victoria Promenade and encouraged residents to sign if they opposed the project.

## Media Coverage

In October 2022, there were seven stories published by Global, iNews880, CBC TV, CBC Radio, Edmonton Journal, Edmonton Sun, CTV, Taproot. Headlines included:

- *Frustration mounts over pilot project on Edmonton's Victoria Promenade*
- *Oliver residents petition city for bike-lane changes along Victoria Promenade*
- *Residents of Edmonton's Oliver community seek redesign of Victoria Promenade bike lane pilot*
- *Bike lane battle: Some downtown residents unhappy after promenade parking spaces removed*

## Technical Analysis: What We Observed

In addition to public engagement, the City of Edmonton also conducted a technical analysis to evaluate the pilot. Data was collected by both the City and residents on Victoria Promenade to monitor and evaluate travel patterns and behaviour before and after the installation of the Victoria Promenade Pilot Project. Both data sources were used in the technical analysis.

The technical data was used to explore the following key questions:

1. How have cyclists' behaviour and travel patterns changed?
2. Has the traffic calming and adaptable measures helped with traffic shortcutting?
3. What impact does the installation have on vehicles' speeds?
4. How often are emergency services accessing Victoria Promenade, and has the new layout impacted their response time?

To answer these questions, data was collected from multiple sources, including data collection cameras, and speed counters. This data was collected over several days both before and after the pilot project was installed.

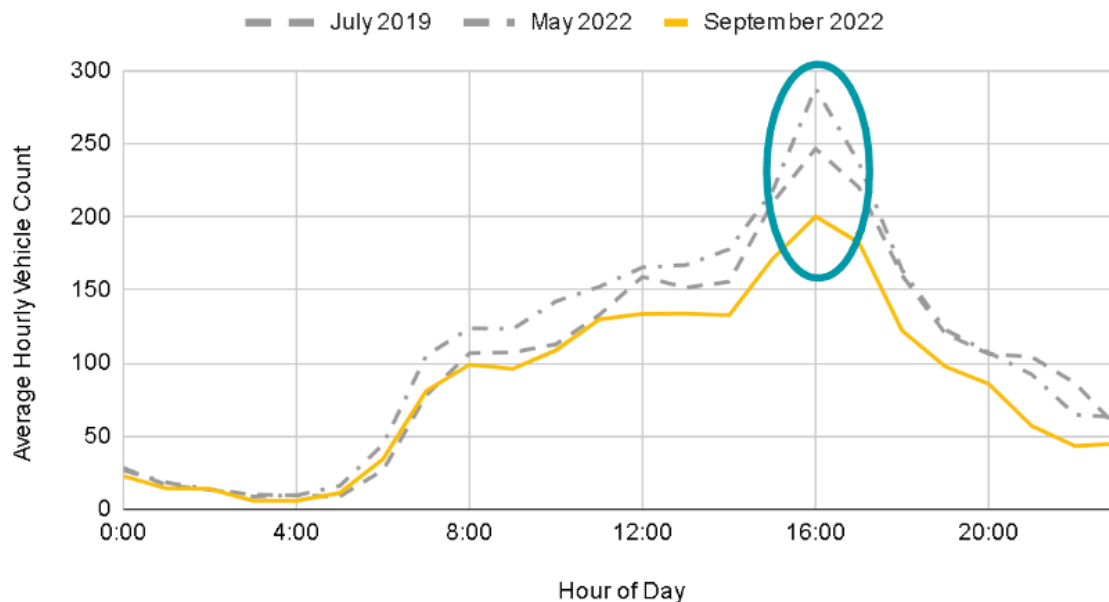
Based on the results of the technical analysis, the Victoria Promenade Pilot Project is achieving the goal of slowing speeds and improving cyclists' behaviour (reduced sidewalk riding and proper usage of bike lanes), demonstrating that the design of the road can safely accommodate all road users, regardless of how they move.

Theme	Finding
<b>Driver Behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced traffic shortcutting ensures that the road is functioning for those who live on the street</li> </ul>
<b>Vehicle Speeds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower vehicle speeds overall</li> <li>High compliance to the new default 40 km/h speed limit reduces risk for all people travelling through the area</li> </ul>
<b>Mode Shift</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued high cyclist usage (~300-500 cyclists each day) compared to other popular bike lanes</li> </ul>
<b>Cyclist Behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improvements to cyclist behaviour               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sidewalk cycling reduced from 14.2% of riders to 8.5% of riders, creating a separation from people walking</li> <li>Over 90% of cyclists used the bike lanes, with only small percentage riding the wrong way</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Theme	Finding
<b>Pedestrian Usage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued high pedestrian usage, with over 1,300 pedestrians travelling on the Victoria Promenade each day</li> </ul>
<b>Emergency Vehicle Response Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project infrastructure has not hindered the response times of emergency services on the road</li> </ul>

## How are Vehicles Using the Space

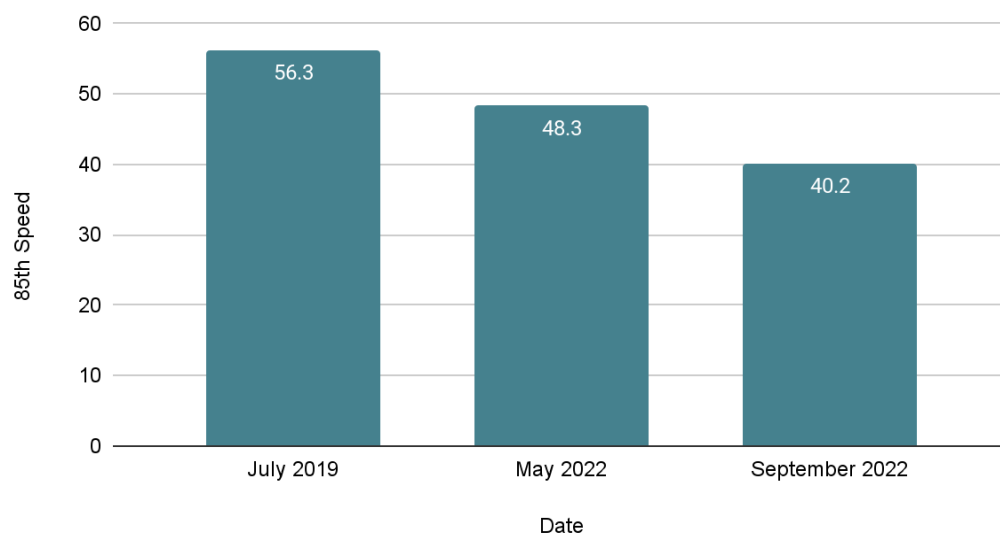
Data from the speed counts show that there has been a decrease in vehicle volumes since the pilot project was installed. As shown in Figure 1, traffic volumes throughout the day in September 2022 were considerably lower than previous studies. The largest reduction in traffic volume was during the afternoon rush hour, suggesting that fewer vehicles are using Victoria Promenade as a shortcutting route.



**Figure 1. Hourly traffic volume at the Promenade**

## More Vehicles Are Slowing Down and Following the Speed Limit

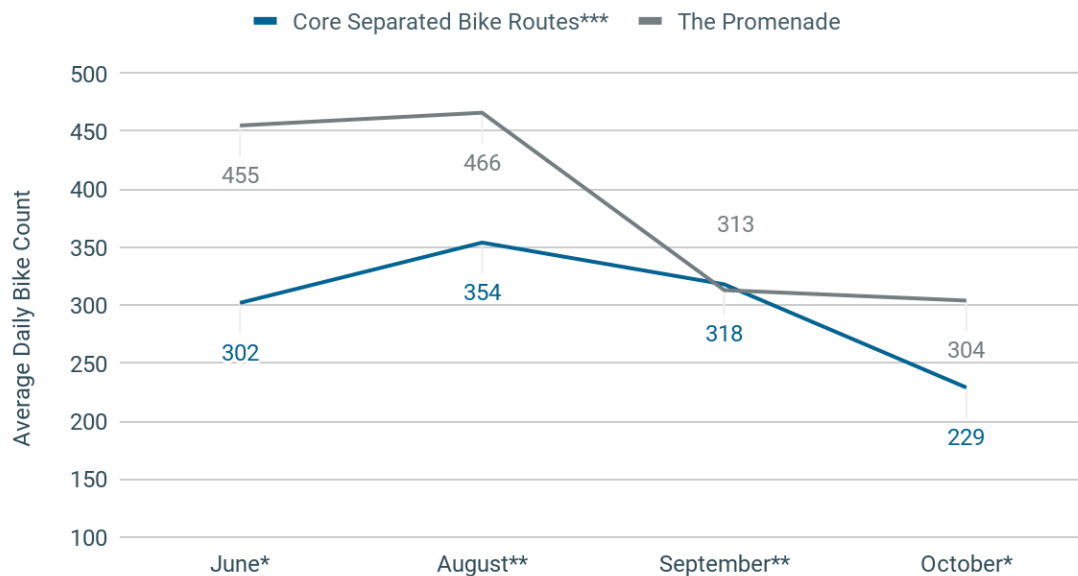
Generally, with less congestion and lower traffic volumes, higher speeds are expected; however, following the project installation, there was a substantial improvement in speed limit compliance on the Victoria Promenade. Vehicle speeds have decreased and are now in compliance with the new default 40 km/h speed limit as shown in Figure 2. The lower traffic speed creates a space that is safe for the many vulnerable road users that use it on a daily basis, such as people biking, walking and crossing the street.



**Figure 2. 85th Percentile Speed at the Promenade**

## How Cyclists are Using the Space

Based on bike counts, usage of the Victoria Promenade space remained higher than other separated bike routes both before and after the new lane was installed. Figure 3 shows the average daily bike counts on Victoria Promenade compared to similar separated bike routes in the city.



**Figure 3. Daily bike counts at the Promenade and comparable bike routes**

\* Counts collected for 2 days using video cameras by residents on Victoria Promenade

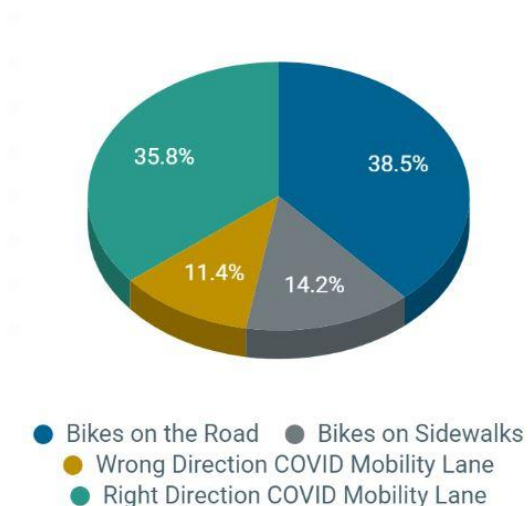
\*\* Promenade counts collected for 7 days using video cameras by the City of Edmonton

\*\*\* Average bike volume as per 23 permanent eco-counters on the [Downtown Bike Network](#), [West Central Bike Network](#), and [South Central Bike Network](#)

Video data was used to observe where cyclists were riding, and how they were using the space. As shown in Figure 4, in 2020, there were many instances of people biking in the wrong direction in the mobility lane or riding on sidewalks. This was also reflected through numerous resident complaints.

After implementation, sidewalk riding dropped, and fewer cyclists rode in the wrong direction on the bike lanes. Drop in sidewalk riding is particularly important because the Victoria Promenade is a popular location for people to walk and exercise while enjoying the view, and this continued to be the case in 2022 after the project was installed.

2020 Bike Travel Patterns Breakdown



2022 Bike Travel Patterns Breakdown

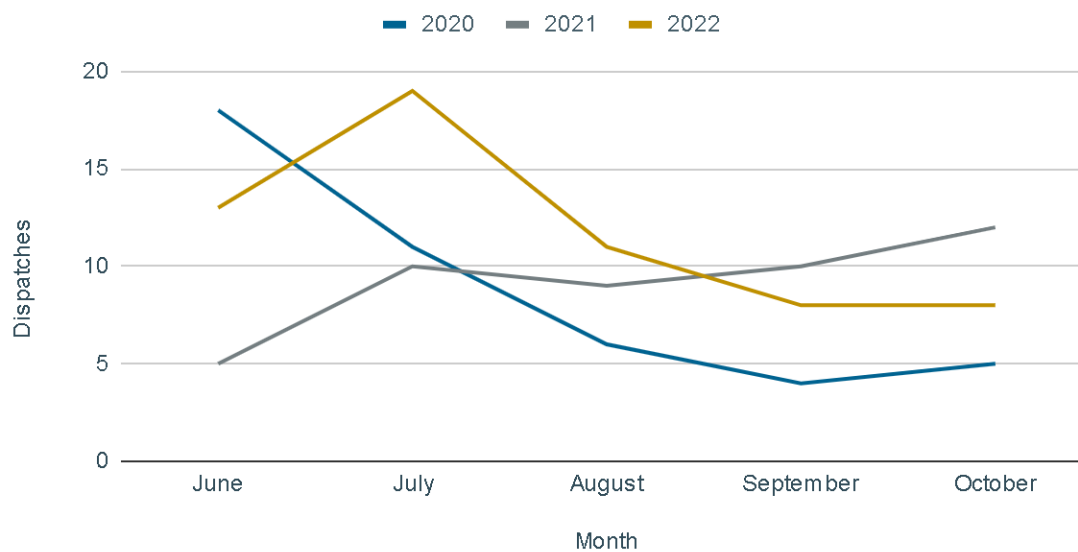
**Figure 4. Bike travel patterns breakdown**

## Emergency Services

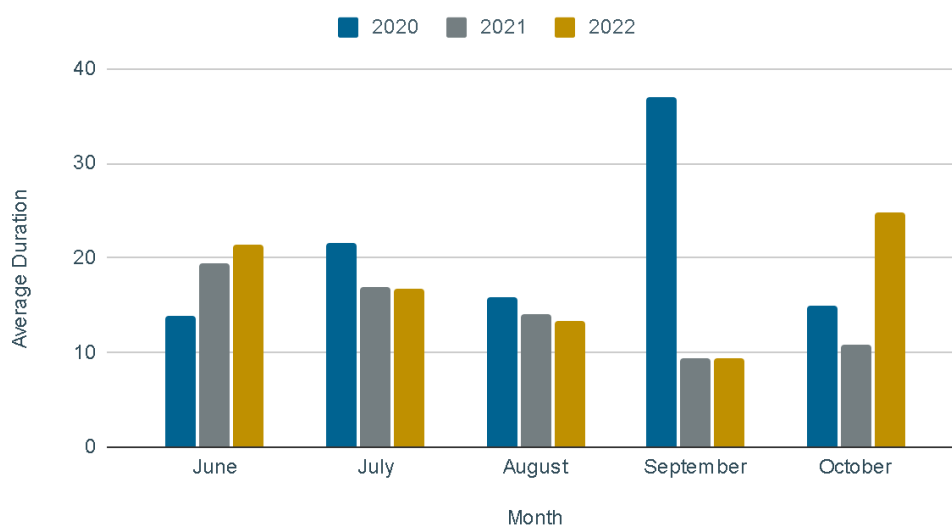
The City engaged with internal stakeholders, including Fire Rescue Services and the Edmonton Police Service, both before and after the implementation of the pilot project. No access or operational concerns were identified by our emergency services partners throughout the installation.

Based on Figure 5, which shows the number of emergency service dispatches per month between 2020 and 2022, the number of dispatches in 2022 after project installation did not exceed 2020 and 2021 numbers. While there were more calls in July 2022 than in previous years, the overall trends are similar year to year. The average duration of time spent by emergency services at Victoria Promenade is reflected in Figure 6. Since installation, the average time spent remained comparable to 2020 and 2021.

These results demonstrate that the pilot project installation has not created accessibility concerns for emergency services.



**Figure 5. Number of emergency services dispatched at the Promenade**



**Figure 6. Average time spent by the emergency services at the Promenade**

## What Happens Next?

While there have been positive impacts on speeding, shortcutting and cyclist behaviours as a result of this project, the installation did not meet the needs of some community members. Through public engagement, community members have raised concerns about issues such as reduced building access for seniors and for people who use mobility aids, loss of convenient vehicle access, aesthetics, the impact of winter and safety overall.

As a result, adjustments will be made to the Victoria Promenade Pilot Project. This includes the removal of the north side bike lane and lowering the speed limit along the Victoria Promenade to 30 km/h. The bike lane on the south side, as well as the traffic calming on 100 Avenue east of 117 Street and between 116 Street and 117 Street, will remain in place.

The City is committed to communities and listening and learning to those who utilise our public spaces and appreciates everyone who has shared their experiences with the Victoria Promenade Pilot Project.

Subscribe for project updates and to connect with the project team, visit [engaged.edmonton.ca/Victoria-Promenade](https://engaged.edmonton.ca/Victoria-Promenade).