## IAP2 Core Values Award Submission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title:</strong></th>
<th>What the B*ke! Evolving Engagement for Edmonton’s Bike Lane Projects</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Award Category:</strong></td>
<td>Project: Creativity, Contribution and Innovation in the Field</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Organization name:</strong></td>
<td>The City of Edmonton</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Nominee Name:</strong></td>
<td>The City of Edmonton</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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**Case Study**

What the B’ke! Evolving Engagement for Edmonton’s Bike Lane Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizing Group</th>
<th>City of Edmonton</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Edmonton, Alberta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Key Question/Problem</td>
<td>Edmonton’s City Council adopted a <em>Bicycle Transportation Plan</em> in 2009 to guide the development of an extensive city-wide bike network, and encourage more people to choose cycling more often. While this demonstrated forward thinking and an urban approach, there is a tension between well-meaning policy and what’s acceptable in reality. Since first installing bikeways in 2010, City processes have led to a polarized public concerned about personal impacts with unclear benefit. After this became the top election issues in 2013, Council directed the development of, and later approved, new approaches to engagement that give citizens a greater role in decision-making, with a process that is more accessible and inclusive. The new process was launched to support two new major bike routes in Strathcona and Downtown.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sample Methods</td>
<td>Public workshops, stakeholder hubs (committees), small group meetings, 1:1 discussions, pop-up bike lanes with bike festival, online discussion forums, pop-up engagement at the farmers market, twitter, Facebook, radio, print ads, street signs, notification through community leagues and other organizations, personalized letters, mail drops.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Moving into a discussion on the new major bike routes following a very difficult and angry conversation, made successful by making a very public apology that enabled citizens to give this process a chance. It stayed successful because the project team went to great lengths to reach people, worked collaboratively and diligently to find proposals to optimize everyone’s needs. The new approaches are a framework that will be applied to all future projects, and shared with other organizations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact Level</td>
<td>City-wide</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time Frame</td>
<td>11 months (ultimately 18 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People Engaged</td>
<td>966 to date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web Link</td>
<td><a href="http://www.edmonton.ca/cycling">www.edmonton.ca/cycling</a></td>
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The Problem and the Challenge

The City of Edmonton is transforming into an increasingly vibrant and sustainable city that is guided by a bold, citizen-built vision for the year 2040. This vision includes a long-term transportation plan to enable Edmontonians of all ages and abilities to safely walk, bike, take transit, rideshare or drive to important destinations.

Edmonton wants to be a bike friendly city, so in 2009 it adopted a Bicycle Transportation Plan to guide the development of an extensive city-wide bike network that would encourage more people to choose cycling more often. From the first bike infrastructure installation in 2010, to what became a tipping point in 2013, on-street bike projects were a growing source of frustration for many citizens. While there was support in principle to invest in cycling infrastructure and encourage more sustainable ways to travel; it was challenged when citizens were faced with personal impacts such as losing front-street parking or a driving lane. Also they were confused about how to safely use the roadway when new bike lanes, signage, and traffic controls were added.

There was an extensive consultation process to build the 2009 bike plan, and it included significant discussion to identify the specific bike routes. But this process did not the identify impacts and challenges that would be faced when fitting bike lanes into existing roadway corridors. These impacts were not evident to many citizens who opted not to participate because they did not see a connection, nor were they clear to many of the citizens who did participate. Ultimately, citizens began to question the value and need for the new infrastructure.

Some of the concern can be attributed to the fact that cycling infrastructure is new to the City of Edmonton and it pushed people out of their comfort zones. But program decisions also played a role, including direction to emphasize quantity (kilometres built) over quality (ie. physically separated facilities); and choices to maximize budget by integrating new projects into rehabilitation projects rather than purposely building in areas with greater demand. This was supported by an engagement process that was too short, too simplified, and lacked opportunities to bring people together to discuss a shared vision.

New Approach - Strathcona and Downtown Routes

Controversy over the 2013 bike projects spilled over to become the top issue of the municipal election. The new council directed administration to develop new engagement approaches with a greater role for the public in decision-making and a process that was more accessible and inclusive. With Council and stakeholder group input, a new approach was approved by Council in June 2014.
The new process involves citizens earlier in the decision-making process, with more ability to influence where the routes would be located and how they would be evaluated. It adds opportunities for discussion and input to help make decisions on trade-offs and design choices. It adds more opportunity to build familiarity with the projects by taking more time (18-24 months compared to the previous six months), and it adds communications touchpoints and relationship-building opportunities by increasing the number of consultation stages (to six, compared to the previous two).

In response to what we heard, the program shifted to focus on higher quality routes with greater separation/protection to appeal to a wider range of cyclist abilities, and located in areas with higher existing cyclist ridership. The new engagement process was adopted for projects in the Strathcona, and Downtown areas. From June 2014 to April 2015, three consultation stages were completed, which included identifying route location, defining major infrastructure and operational components, resolving trade-offs and developing mitigation strategies. The future stages will focus on identifying aesthetic enhancements and communicating construction impacts.

**The Role of Public Participation**

The process is focused on strengthening relationships, collaboration, ongoing dialogue, and bringing city-wide and local stakeholders together with the project team to discuss shared interests, values, and jointly discuss how the project could move forward. The process was iterative, so input at each engagement stage was used to build options for the next stage of discussion, making it important to check back with participants on how input was incorporated and how concerns were being addressed at each milestone.

**Decisions to be made through the project**

| Route locations and the criteria to evaluate them |
| Define the type and scale of infrastructure needed on the corridor, including the infrastructure directly supporting cyclists (such as physical barriers), and infrastructure to support surrounding uses (such as adding traffic calming and safety measures). |

**Information needed from citizens**

| Values and factors to be considered when identifying location and considering design options, including how the routes contribute locally, community-wide, and city-wide. |
| Priorities on a wide range of topics including safety, parking, trees, and boulevards |
Decisions to be made through the project, continued

Determining if changes need to be made to transportation operations (such as adding a new traffic signal, reviewing pedestrian crossing locations, removing a vehicle travel lane or converting a roadway to a one-way operation). These could impact travel patterns for all types of transportation methods, and could include access and travel pattern impacts for businesses for commercial and residential areas.

Making decisions about priorities and trade-offs in the design, and developing mitigation strategies to address impacts.

Identifying aesthetic treatments to “fit” the bike infrastructure into the community.

Information needed from citizens, continued

Important connections and key destinations

Local insight and knowledge about travel patterns, vehicle use, pedestrian use, and potential cyclist issues.

How residents and business patrons use the area, as well as the challenges and the opportunities that could be part of the future

Potential planning or project conflicts.

Alignment with Core Values

Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.

Before plans were developed, the project team met with over 40 adjacent property owners and stakeholder organizations to discuss how they use the area and what they see for its future. Once the first stage was completed, and the project team knew where the routes would be located and where there were pinch points, they were able to work with these groups to optimize plans.

Knox Metropolitan United Church is one of the adjacent properties on the Strathcona bike route. Beyond church services, this building is home to a busy day care and numerous community programs. It has no parking on-site, so parishioners and other users rely on the street parking.

Working with the church from the outset of the process was key in building trust and identifying how the plans could best work with the church’s needs. At each decision-making point, the team met with the church to talk through design options and trade-offs, such as the option to remove the large mature trees to retain parking on this street, while retaining these trees was identified as one of the most important characteristics of the neighbourhood.

Through dialogue a proposal to build a loading zone with disabled parking was proposed to accommodate the most emergent needs. The church is very satisfied with the solution even though it doesn’t include parking. What they appreciated is the relationship they had with the project team, where there was open discussion, and diligent efforts to explore solutions.
Public participation includes the promise that the public’s contribution will influence the decision.

One of the complications with the previous engagement approach was the premise that because the bike routes were approved by Council in the Bicycle Transportation Plan, the consultation process could not consider where the routes would be located – only how they could fit into that area. Of all the frustrations citizens expressed, the inability to influence the route location inspired the most distrust.

Going into the new process, we heard from decision-makers and stakeholder groups that on the whole there was confidence in the Bicycle Transportation Plan, but there was a need to review some of the route specific decisions when it came to implementation. Adding a review of potential route locations was an important addition in the new process, as was a decision to have citizens shape the criteria to be used to evaluate those routes. This dialogue gave the project greater insight into the priorities and needs of citizens, and it helped ensure the decisions reflected the context of the local areas.

Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.

The types of bike facilities we are planning are new to Edmonton, and on the whole our citizens are not aware of what they are or how they work.

To help citizens understand what these facilities look like and involve, and how they could fit into neighbourhoods, the project team set up a special weekend with pop-up bike lanes and bike festival. The pop-up demonstrated how different types of bike infrastructure could fit into the same space, and therefore what the impacts of different infrastructure choices are. They had an opportunity to experience trade-offs such as traffic calming measures and roadway closures. And they had an opportunity to try the different options as a cyclist, a pedestrian, or a motorist.
Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.

One of the challenges the project faced was reaching out and involving the right people at the right time. The most obvious impacts from these routes are more localized to specific geographic spaces, but as major bike routes these corridors have an important role to play in connecting to a city-wide network. Stakeholder meetings and outreach connected local interests with city-wide groups such as the Alberta Motor Association and the Advisory Board on Persons with Disabilities.

Many different tools and techniques were used, including online discussion forums, individual and small group meetings, stakeholder hubs, and large group public workshops.

The project went out to the people instead of relying on people to come to the project. Outreach included booths at Farmers Markets and other local events. For areas where there were constraints and potential impacts, team members hand-delivered information about those impacts and offered to meet directly with the homeowners as needed. On-site meetings were held on the downtown route to physically show how a proposed shared-use path could fit into the corridor, and how it could impact adjacent properties.

Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.

Building the new engagement approach for bike routes involved reviewing the many concerns we heard from citizens about the process in previous years, significant discussion with Councillors, and discussions with stakeholder groups and community leaders.

Councillor Michael Walters brought a group of citizens together for a focus group discussion, and other meetings were held with stakeholder organizations as a lead up to preparing the approaches for City Council to consider. A question about how to people want to be involved in this conversation was used to start off our online discussion forum. Overall, we heard a strong message from citizens that they wanted to influence more impactful decisions such as where the routes would be located. We also heard the conversation needed to use many different tools in-person, online, with stakeholder groups and with the general public, and it needed to consider local and city-wide implications.

Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.

The environment for a major discussion about new bike routes was strained heading into this project. Citizens expressed distrust based on past experiences where bike routes were installed with a conversation that didn’t touch on the key issues they needed to discuss in order to feel heard.

We needed to do something different, meaningful, and powerful to demonstrate this would be a different experience. We initiated a large communications effort with an edgy theme to apologize and pledge to do things differently.
Our communications efforts for bike projects have always talked about why we needed cycling infrastructure, but mostly in a way that spoke to meeting the goals set out in the bike plan. Going forward, we knew we needed to put a greater focus on the “why” we needed bike routes to help people understand potential personal benefits and why it was important for the city’s future.

We knew from our market research that the experience of driving by the existing bike lanes left people with a feeling of fear and anger. To help educate people on what to do, at our public workshops we provided opportunities for people to participate in an activity that taught the rules for cyclists and motorists. We used a fun activity that helped people understand the basics of how to use the infrastructure to prepare them for a deeper discussion that reached beyond initial positions.

Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.

Designing the bike routes was an iterative process, that started from scratch with the input of stakeholders. There was no route, no evaluation criteria, and no preconceived ideas about how the routes would be designed. At each stage of the design process, this meant we needed to report back to participants to ensure we heard the message, show the new designs, show how the input was considered, and get input on the next phase.

There were many ways we reported back, including stakeholder meetings, 1:1 conversations, written reports and public meetings. We included the media as part of the communication. For example, in June 2014 our first round of engagement sought input on potential route locations and evaluation criteria. In September, we hosted a media availability to share information about what we heard, which route was chosen and why. This set the stage for the next round of consultation soliciting input on design options within the selected routes.

Creating Relationships and Building Trust

The project team has emphasized how important relationships have been to the design process. Because the team has been responsive, they have built trust that has helped resolve issues. The example of Knox Church exemplifies this. The solution is not what the Church wanted, but they are happy because they understand why, and they know their concerns were seriously considered.

“As a former Community League President who has gone through various city consultations, I found that the major bike routes consultation process to be excellent. No decisions were made in advance which means Edmontonians absolutely had the opportunity to shape these projects. What stood out to me was a constituent who was frustrated with another city consultation that was taking place in their community came up to me to tell me that this was ‘The best consultation process I have ever been a part of.’ That’s wonderful feedback to receive and after witnessing their work first-hand, it does not surprise me to hear such a positive comment.”

Councillor Andrew Knack
Evaluation Process

The project is using a multi-faceted evaluation process that includes qualitative and quantitative assessment at each phase.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Method</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders and public understand the project and the role of public</td>
<td>Level of understanding and tone of feedback received via public</td>
<td>Check in after each stakeholder meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>involvement in decision-making.</td>
<td>inquiries/meeting proceedings.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Participants are satisfied with how the process evolved and that their</td>
<td>Participant satisfaction re: inclusiveness and appropriateness of the</td>
<td>Check-in with elected officials at project</td>
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<tr>
<td>involvement provided meaningful and valuable input to the project.</td>
<td>PI process and individual methods/activities.</td>
<td>milestones to discuss how it is working, and</td>
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<tr>
<td>Input is actionable and can be used to help develop the plan.</td>
<td>Satisfaction with responsiveness of design team to questions and</td>
<td>what they are hearing from their constituents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participants feel valued and heard</td>
<td>concerns.</td>
<td>Participant evaluation forms and online</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Ability of design team to respond/incorporate comments/suggestion/concerns</td>
<td>feedback from each public event</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Degree to which plans changed as a result of input</td>
<td>Observations around attendance and participation levels</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Team debriefs at each milestone</td>
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“Our new process has been very helpful in actually connecting citizens to the trade-off conversations that are necessary to make decisions on this kind of retroactive infrastructure project. There is no perfect answer to how you build a new bike system into an existing corridor, everyone thinks they are a great idea until they understand the specific questions and then they realize that there are some hard decisions that need to be made. Our new process has been very successful in winning public support by getting their knowledge to make sure we are making the best decisions. They have been challenged with the important and difficult questions at every step of the way. The benefits are both that we know we are moving forward with the broadest possible public support and ownership, and perhaps even more important, that the local knowledge that is necessary to make the best decisions has had huge weight in the planning of these routes.”

Councillor Ben Henderson
We have made adjustments to the process throughout as part of what we heard in the evaluation. These include:

- Our meetings evolved with stakeholders, transitioning from small group and 1:1s where we built relationships, to creating community hubs in order to shift from individual concerns to community solutions.
- Localized meetings: we always went to citizens to respond to discuss concerns, such as a meeting on the Downtown route with a group of homeowners concerned about a shared-use path.
- Found different ways to accommodate small group discussion in a drop-in style event, as many found the commitment to a full workshop a barrier.
- Honoured local business - catering, rentals, door prizes.

Results:

- Participant evaluation forms consistently show that more than 70% of the participants felt they had a greater understanding of the projects because of their attendance, and that participating in the sessions has been worthwhile. Additionally, attendance at public workshops has been steadily growing since the project started. Comment forms also praised the engagement process. People felt heard.
- The design team has been making many adjustments based on the input that has been received. An example is on the Downtown bike route, where there is a shopping district. At the beginning of the project some of the shop owners and the surrounding community league advocated for closing a part of the intersection to create a public gathering space and address short-cutting concerns. Options were created that included a partial closure, but when they were reviewed all agreed that the impact on access for the shops would be too significant to pursue.
- Council decided to fund both bike projects for construction since the project started.

**Uniqueness of the Project**

Some of the more innovative elements of the project include the Pop-up bike festival, including sample bike infrastructure installations, and the What the B*ke ad campaign. Additional features include bringing Edmonton’s poet laureate into the project to write a poem based on what she heard at the sessions.

These help advance engagement through:

- Starting off the process with a very public apology was risky, but it was integral in taking responsibility and building trust, creating the right environment for this conversation.
- The pop-up bike festival demonstrated the importance of experience. People could actually try and see the potential infrastructure, which helped alleviate some of the fears and misconceptions about how it could work.
- The graphic facilitator and the poet laureate demonstrate how using multiple forms of communications - or story telling - can lead to more inclusive reporting.
## Appendix 1 - Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Exploring Route Locations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONSULTATION</strong></td>
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</table>
| May - July 2014 | Build Relationships - 'Catalyse Conversations'
| What: | Understand and prioritize community needs, values, factors and concerns
| Explore routes based on needs, values and factors |
| Create route options to be drafted and evaluated by tech team |
| How: | Stakeholder Conversations (individually and groups), Stakeholder Hubs, interactive workshops, online dialogue |

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<tr>
<th>Stage 2</th>
<th>Reviewing Concept Options</th>
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<td><strong>CONSULTATION</strong></td>
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</table>
| Fall 2014 | Demonstrate values and factors in design: ‘Respectful Reflections’
| What: | Review and seek input on 2-3 concepts in interactive, participative process
| Stakeholder Hubs, key interviews as required, interactive workshops, online participation |

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<tr>
<th>Stage 3</th>
<th>Getting Feedback on Single Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONSULTATION</strong></td>
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</table>
| Fall-Winter 2014 | Seeking community wisdom on a single plan that is based on all of their previous input
| ‘Did we get it right? |
| How: | Dialogue on one concept on a single corridor discussing tradeoffs and mitigations. Stakeholder Hubs, key interviews as required, online engagement, interactive meeting/event |

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 4</th>
<th>Sharing and Celebrating the Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>INFORMATION SHARING</strong></td>
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</table>
| Winter 2014-15 | Sharing the final plan and celebrating work of the community
| What: | Final plan |

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<tr>
<th>Stage 5</th>
<th>Determining Aesthetics</th>
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<td><strong>CONSULTATION</strong></td>
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</table>
| 2015 | Local stakeholders and community members offer suggestions on aesthetic treatments for barriers if required, landscaping 'beautification'
| What: | Smaller group meetings (location specific) with examples of possible treatment options |
| How: | |

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<th>Stage 6</th>
<th>Closing the Loop</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>INFORMATION SHARING</strong></td>
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</table>
| 2015 | Report back on results of entire project and maintain relationships: Close the Loop
| What: | To be determined by community and stakeholders, share construction timing details |
| How: | |
To Whom It May Concern:

I was very pleased that Knox-Metropolitan United Church was consulted early in the bike lane selection process and that when 83rd Ave was selected, our concerns about safety and access for our members and the parents and children of our day-care were seriously addressed. Several separate meetings were held where our concerns were discussed. An acceptable design solution has been proposed as has a Sunday parking option.

We were kept abreast of developments in planning and participated throughout. The city planning team dealt with us in an honest, forthright and polite manner. The planning team and consultation process are to be commended.

If you wish to discuss this further, please contact me at dmbrodie@telus.net or 780-439-3575.

Don Brodie
Trustee and Board Member
Knox-Metropolitan United Church
8307 – 83 Avenue
Edmonton

To Whom It May Concern

I am delighted to provide this positive feedback on the work that Katie Soles and the City of Edmonton conducted during its consultation with representatives of the congregation at Knox-Metropolitan United Church regarding the 83rd Avenue Bike Path.

The City of Edmonton was very prompt in their response to our request to meet and talk about the ways in which the bike path would affect the safety of those who use our church on a daily basis. The people from Katie's team and the City of Edmonton actively listened to our concerns regarding safety and access to the church, and provided us with an understanding of the many considerations they were balancing throughout this project. The tone of the meeting was one of mutual respect and focused on finding innovative solutions to our concerns. We were able to have a very candid discussion, with all opinions being respected and left with a plan for next steps in the process.

At the second meeting with Councillor Ben Henderson in attendance, a variety of options for the bike path were introduced. Again, Katie and her colleagues set the tone for a respectful and candid discussion that allowed us to articulate our concerns and explore a variety of options that addressed our key issues of safety and access for all who enter our church. The team made a commitment to return to our congregation with a draft plan prior to that plan being presented to the public. Katie and the team fulfilled this commitment and met with representatives from the congregation to present the draft plan.

Although the draft plan was not exactly as we had discussed or anticipated, it did meet our key priorities of addressing the safety and access concerns we raised at our previous meetings. Katie and her team also met with members of our congregation after a church service to provide information and answer questions about the Bike Path, which was a much appreciated step in the process.

Overall, we found that Katie and the team from the City of Edmonton listened well to our concerns and did consider the implications that the bike path on 83rd Avenue would have for
the members of our congregation, parents and children of the daycare in our building, and members of the community who use our facility. In doing so, the team came up with a solution that met our core concerns while balancing the needs and expectations of the broader community and users of the bike path. We greatly appreciated the consistency of the information provided, the professional and respectful tone of every interaction, and the fact that this team followed through on commitments regarding connecting and communicating with our congregation.

If you have any questions about this endorsement, or would like further information, please contact me at 780-237-4821 or cmcathyanne2@gmail.com.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this feedback.

Cathy Martin
Past Chair - Knox-Metropolitan United Church.

To Whom It May Concern,

“Instead of building bike lanes 'for' communities, Edmonton’s new major bike route consultation process will allow us to build bike lanes 'with' communities.”

Michael Walters
City Councillor - Ward 10
Edmonton, Alberta
780-496-8132
www.michaelwalters.ca
Appendix 3 - Our Movement is a Dance

This poem was written on the spot during three nights of the City of Edmonton’s What the Bike forum on June 17-19, 2014. A version of the poem, comprised from discussion at the forum, was read at the end of each night. This is the final version.

Since the beginning, we have been moving through this city

Originally we used rivers for roadways, found ourselves a major artery in the rush of the North Saskatchewan River

and we moved

on water and on foot through forest, which turned to dirt path which turned to gravel to pavement

it was a time when the first cars shared roads with wagons and bicycles found themselves at the core of community

While the Edmonton Journal was busy sponsoring bike races in Edwardian Edmonton, locals were celebrating the two-wheeled miracle with their own races at picnics and on holidays

and the High Level Bridge was being built above the rush of our original river road

an engineering marvel the bridge was designed specifically for two wagons with full loads to pass without hitting each other

It is obvious that from the beginning, that even in its efforts to avoid jostling wagons, Edmonton became a place that held community at the forefront of its transportation plans

and we grew as a city

And we continue to grow

Today the river finds itself a lazy transportation corridor sleepily stretching itself out beside our yawning giant of a river valley

While the High Level Bridge carries vehicles and pedestrians and over 2000 bicycles per day in and out of the downtown core
Today we move faster
with a direct kinetic energy
to work, to play
to celebrate

Today our roads have become our main arteries
moving us in and out of the hearts of our communities
we have recognized their importance in naming them:
Wayne Gretzky, Anthony Henday, Emily Murphy

they carry the lifeblood of the city, its people,
to their destinations

But roads are not the only routes
not the only places where people choose to move
there are arteries of pavement for cyclists and pedestrians
paths that are just as necessary
that also deserve to be named after our heroes

These concrete arteries and veins are a reflection
of the vibrancy of the growth of this city

It is no secret that our pavement has become an ever-shifting dance floor
holding the foxtrot of pedestrians
next to the circling waltz of a cyclist
in parallel with the quick spin of a vehicle,
bouncing around the leap frog  stutter step of a bus,
passing the line dance of the LRT

there is a lot of shimmy and shake happening here
but there is something beautiful about this dance
an aesthetic that lives in energy

we are the electron in the moment before the spark

Today our roadways are a negotiation
a slow recognition of how we have chosen to move
with each other
we are, finally, at the moment where the
vehicle asks the bicycle asks the pedestrian
to dance

We are almost there
almost ready to give each other the right of way
to learn from each other in respect

You can tell a very different story of this city
from learning its streets through your feet
through the pump of your bicycle
through the window of your vehicle

It is not a question of how we have come to dance
we have a movement to this city, we have learned
to rush with its river,

It is obvious that we are moving through this city
with our hearts
laying them out on the pavement
marking where we have been

Whether we are on bicycles,
on foot or in vehicles
We are passionately moving
through this city

Rather it is a question of how we take the lessons of the river’s flow
It’s ability to bend around obstacles
to cradle its passengers in its movement
glide them over its bumps

and bring that to our communities

Our movement is a dance card request
an invitation
a letter to this city

asking for safety for all modes of transportation
the personal cost of insurance to move with awareness
and responsibility through this city

asking for a space for sustainable movement

a place where bike routes are accessible to all demographics
where they slope and stretch but do not steep too often

where our bodies do not freefall into a pothole
or skid across stray gravel

where bicycles are not portaged like canoes
due to snow or ice or cracking pavement

where there is room for everyone
where cars can park
and trees can grow
and bicycles can move with the trueness of an arrow

where the curb becomes another way for a vehicle
to tell a cyclist or a pedestrian I love you
but I respect that you need space
where gridlock learns to expand its lungs and 
breathe into a pollution-free zone

where we can get from one place to another clearly and directly 
where a bike path begins to hold hands 
with a bus route in an unbreakable agreement

our movement is a letter to this city, 
we are writing a living transportation ecosystem 
into being

If we imagine the city to be a bicycle wheel 
the inner tube of the Anthony Henday surrounding us 
the veins of this city as the spokes of the wheel 
As we travel ourselves down through the spokes 
into the core of our city

it is obvious that we are connected

and that we are connecting 
we are sharing space and a dream of a dance 
where veins run parallel with major arteries 
so there is room for everyone to move

It is obvious that we are moving forward 
creating new possibilities of movement

We are writing an invitation to a dance, 
sending it out to everyone in this city 
saying, “welcome” 
“you’re finally here, 
stay awhile, 
come dance with us 
show us your best moves 
we’ve been saving this space for you 
let’s grow it together”