

# Aldermen to reconsider Dodge Avenue bike lanes at City Council

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Daily file photo by Lauren Duquette

Ald. Ann Rainey (8th) speaks at a city meeting. Rainey has asked that City Council consider the necessity for bike lanes on Dodge Avenue between Howard Street and Oakton Street at Monday's City Council meeting.

Syd Stone, City Editor

April 22, 2018

Aldermen are set to vote Monday on a request to review bike lanes on Dodge Avenue, following mixed reviews from community members regarding their effectiveness.

Ald. Ann Rainey (8th) has asked that City Council consider the necessity for bike lanes — which were installed in summer 2015 — on Dodge Avenue between Howard Street and Oakton Street.

In 2015, Evanston applied for and received a Congestion Mitigation Air Quality grant with the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning for the Dodge Avenue Bike Lane Improvements project. The CMAQ grant paid for 80 percent of the project, leaving the city responsible for 20 percent of the costs, according to city documents.

Initial cost of the installation for the bike lanes was \$455,186. City Council approved a resolution to authorize the city manager to execute an agreement with the Illinois Department of Transportation for the construction of the Dodge Avenue Bike Lane Improvements project in January 2015.

After the installation of the bike lanes, the city received mixed feedback from residents. Discussion at City Council meetings in September and October 2016 led city staff to make modifications to parking that increased visibility at cross streets and created more space for buses to pull to the side of the street at marked bus stops. The speed limit was also reduced to 25 mph, but the bike lanes were kept intact.

Now, aldermen will consider removing the bike lanes from Howard Street to Oakton Street.

At Mayor Steve Hagerty's town hall meeting earlier this month, some attendees said the bike lanes pose a danger to 8th Ward residents. Others said there is not enough space for a bike lane, parking lane and car traffic on Dodge Avenue. About 20 people voiced their opinions on the proposed changes to bike lanes at an October 2016 City Council meeting as well.

Evanston resident Barbara Kerrens said at the April town hall meeting that bikers on Dodge Avenue “act like they’re on cars” and ride too fast on the new bike lanes, increasing the risk of accidents.

However, according to city documents, accidents at the intersection of Dodge Avenue and Howard Street have gone down from 10 to three since 2015. Bicyclist accidents have also gone down from 10 to three.

City staff would need to prepare contract documents and hire a contractor to remove the bike lanes — costing an estimated \$150,000, according to city documents. The city would also likely need to pay back a portion of or the entire CMAQ grant received. Returning the grant may also jeopardize future grants that the city applies for from the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

Council will also consider a loan agreement and five-year lease with Hip Circle Empowerment Center, a nonprofit dance studio, for city-owned property at 727 Howard St.

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## Comments

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