

# METRO

MONDAY, APRIL 14, 2008 | CHICAGOLAND | SECTION 2

## Road may get bypass surgery

Elston would be rerouted near accident-prone area

By Jon Hilkevitch  
TRIBUNE REPORTER

After initially considering building an underpass to improve traffic flow and safety where Damen, Elston and Fullerton Avenues meet, Chicago transportation officials are now proposing a bypass road.

The goal of the triangular-shaped bypass configuration is to ease traffic chaos at one of the most accident-prone locations in Chicago, where more than 70,000 vehicles converge at the six-legged intersection, according to the Chicago Department of Transportation.

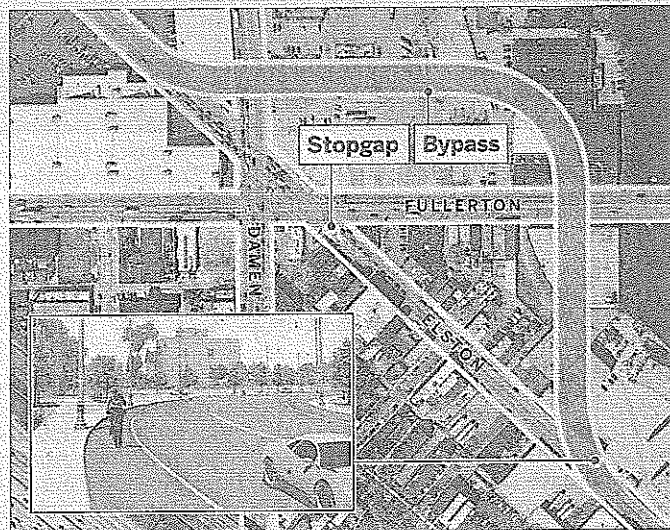
About 90 collisions occur each year at the intersection, officials said.

The triangle design being considered would remove Elston from the

PLEASE SEE **BYPASS** » PAGE 2

### Three's a crowded intersection

The city of Chicago hopes to ease traffic congestion at Damen, Elston and Fullerton by creating an Elston bypass.



SOURCES: City of Chicago, Google Earth

TRIBUNE GRAPHIC

### » BYPASS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

current intersection and create a bypass, according to the proposal unveiled during a public meeting last week.

Elston would curve around the intersection, creating new crossing points at both Damen and Fullerton.

The concept still must be fine-tuned and more public hearings will be held, said CDOT spokesman Brian Steele. Construction is tentatively set for 2010.

The cost of the project is estimated at \$32 million, which includes acquiring some land from property owners that include the Vienna Beef manufacturing plant and the Midtown Tennis Club, Steele said.

The idea is that the stretch

of Elston south of Fullerton that would be bypassed would turn into a smaller collector street, carrying two-way traffic, Steele said.

Officials think bottlenecks would decrease under the plan, which also involves spreading out the signal-controlled intersections and eliminating many conflicting vehicle maneuvers that cause confusion and crashes.

Officials have abandoned an idea to tunnel Fullerton under the intersection, because of traffic-weaving problems and other issues.

A tax-increment financing district has been identified as the funding source for the majority of the project, Steele said.

[jhilkevitch@tribune.com](mailto:jhilkevitch@tribune.com)