



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
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**MAYOR EMANUEL OPENS RECONSTRUCTED SIX-WAY INTERCHANGE AT DAMEN,  
ELSTON AND FULLERTON AVENUES**

*New Traffic Pattern Eliminates Dangerous Interaction and Will Dramatically Improve Traffic Flow*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today cut the ribbon to open a reconstructed and modernized intersection at Damen, Elston and Fullerton Avenues, one of the city's most congestion-plagued traffic hotspots. The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) project realigned the intersection by building a new section of Elston Avenue that connects to Fullerton Avenue east of the original intersection. The realignment allows southeast bound Elston traffic to avoid the Damen and Fullerton intersection, significantly reducing congestion.

"For decades the intersection at Damen, Elston and Fullerton has been one of the most dangerous and congested in Chicago," Mayor Emanuel said. "This major project is a win-win, it has created jobs and economic opportunities across the city and delivered a fully rebuilt and redesigned intersection that is moving traffic more smoothly and safely."

The new stretch of Elston Avenue includes two through lanes for vehicle traffic and protected bike lanes in both directions. Improvements also included the resurfacing of all streets within the project limits, widening Damen to improve traffic flow and better accommodate bikes, and widening the north sidewalk along Fullerton. The project will include the planting of 162 new trees, with about 50 planted to date and the rest planted in the fall.

"More than 70,000 vehicles pass through this intersection each day, and at peak travel times it used to cause major inconvenience for motorists as well as pedestrians and bicyclists," CDOT Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld said. "We implemented a creative solution that has rerouted Elston and synchronized traffic signals to relieve congestion, improving safety for everyone who travels through the area."

The old section of Elston south of Fullerton was renamed N. Elston Court and has been reconstructed with access at Fullerton, and with traffic calming bumpouts at Winchester.

The project also created space for commercial development on both the north side and the south side of Fullerton east of Damen.

The project was originally included in the North Branch North TIF Redevelopment Plan, to facilitate economic development. Several success stories are already evident from this improvement, including the adjacent \$75 million renovation of the Midtown Athletic Club, which is completing construction of a new boutique hotel later this year.

Vienna Beef was able to relocate its manufacturing facility and 250 jobs to another location in Chicago and is actively reconfiguring the use of the former plant to include retail and restaurant space. And WhirlyBall, the popular entertainment complex, has relocated to a new facility in the area at Webster just east of Damen.

"Completion of the Damen, Elston, Fullerton project is exciting news for the many Chicagoans who rely on our city's connected transportation system," said Rep. Quigley. "The addition of a new traffic intersection, as well as safe, accessible bike lanes, will reduce congestion and allow families to get from point A to point B quickly and efficiently. Forward-thinking improvements and investments like these will continue to strengthen our infrastructure and improve the lives of those who call Chicago home."

The \$22.5 million construction cost was paid for through federal, state, and local funds and was managed by CDOT in coordination with the Illinois Department of Transportation.

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