

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: MODIFICATIONS TO CLARK AVENUE BIKE LANES

BACKGROUND:

The southbound lanes on Clark Avenue at the Lincoln Way intersection currently include a bike lane as well as a bike box where bicyclists can move to the head of the line of stopped vehicular traffic before crossing the intersection. Recently, the Iowa DOT completed a resurfacing project on Lincoln Way from Gilchrist Street to Duff Avenue, which resulted in the removal of most of the green bike box at the Clark Avenue intersection. **The bicycle markings, along with the manholes, intakes, and curb and gutter are considered City infrastructure and all repair and replacement costs are the responsibility of the City.**

The original bike box was part of a larger two-block pilot project of bicycle markings and signage. Using current DOT bid prices to estimate the cost to replace the bike box markings, **City staff estimates the cost to be \$32,432.** The paint and markings required are not commonly used by contractors, which increases costs.

Upon learning of the significantly higher costs to replace the markings, City staff evaluated the use of the bike box treatment in this location. **Considering the bike box at this location was an initial trial of this style of treatment in Ames, staff met with the Ames Bicycle Coalition (ABC letter attached) to discuss the cost-effectiveness of the treatment and other bike treatments at this intersection. Through this consultation, it was decided to remove the bike box and provide a dedicated bike lane up to the stop bar at the intersection (drawing attached). The prohibited right turn on red from southbound Clark Avenue onto westbound Lincoln Way will remain, which will continue to provide protection for cyclists in the bike lane.**

This design accomplishes the original purpose of making bicyclists more visible to vehicles and providing safe separation of modes at the intersection at a significantly lower cost of \$2,500.

ALTERNATIVES:

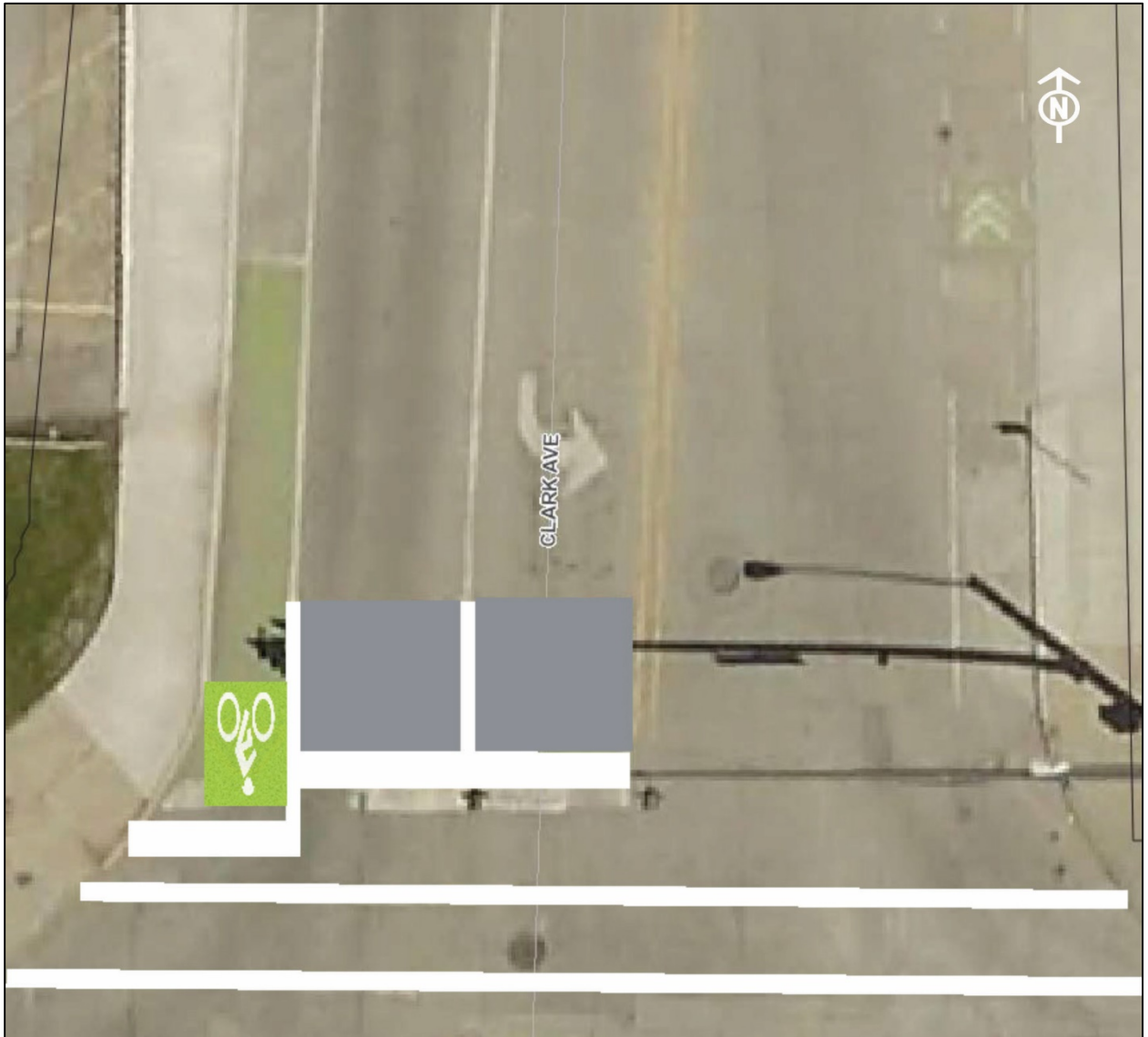
1. Approve the removal of the bike box and replacement with bike lanes as shown in the attached design at the estimated cost of \$2,500.
2. Direct staff to reinstall the bike box at the estimated cost of \$32,432.
3. Direct staff to develop specifications for the removal of bicycle markings at this location.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The proposed modifications to the bicycle markings at this location accomplish the interests of bicyclists to have a dedicated bicycling space, align with the long-term plans for bicycling routes in this corridor and can be installed at a significantly lower cost compared to the reinstallation of the bike box.

Therefore, the City Manager recommends that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, as described above.

Attachment: Proposed Clark Avenue Bike Treatment



June 18, 2019

To: Mayor and Council Members

Re: Clark and Lincolnway Bike Box

ABC has been asked to review the treatment suggested for Clark and Lincolnway. It is unfortunate the bike box is being removed, as we do not feel it was fairly evaluated. To our knowledge no usage numbers were recorded and therefore we cannot truly know if the "experimental" treatment was used by cyclists or not. This lack of valid metrics is of great concern to our members. Some of our members did use the bike box on a regular basis while others felt more comfortable staying in the bicycle lane when waiting for the light.

That said, City staff have worked with us to produce an acceptable treatment at the intersection. By placing bicyclists in a forward position to the cars it should increase visibility of a person on a bicycle and give them a bit of a head start in blending with traffic on S Walnut. The green background under the bicycle will show continuity with the bike lane. This treatment – removing the bike box but repainting the bike lane green and ensuring a forward position for bikes - produces similar safety conditions as a “leading pedestrian interval” where a walk light is turned on for a few seconds prior to the traffic signal. The forward position while keeping the no turn on red and should prevent “right hook” collisions where drivers fail to yield and turn into people on bikes at a stop or moving south, but is still not as safe as use of the bike box. Retention of the no right on red is critical for safety here.

A few additional comments:

1. ABC would like to see a bike box tried in another location. 6th and Grand, heading east has been suggested by several members. Another location would be at Welch and Lincolnway when cyclists are headed north. This could be installed with the new bike lanes on the 100 block of Welch.
2. We urge the city to come up with a plan to measure usage both before and after bicycle facilities are installed. The Complete Streets Manual uses metrics to evaluate the success of projects including mode shift. *“When possible, individual projects metrics should be measured prior to project construction and one, three, and five years following project completion to allow for a baseline comparison and long-term evaluation.”* We need numbers not anecdotal evidence.

3. Bicycle facilities should not be considered optional. If a specialized treatment had been in place for vehicles at Clark and Lincolnway and was destroyed by another project, would it have been replaced? If it had been experimental, would metrics have been recorded? If the city truly wants to see more cyclists (to help address climate change, to help entice more young professionals to live in Ames, etc.) and takes their safety seriously, bicycle facilities need to be treated equally with facilities built for cars.

4. We continue to be concerned with the lack of planning for bicycle facilities. Two things could change that - - creating a bicycle/ pedestrian master plan and hiring a bicycle/ pedestrian coordinator. We recognize those are long-term, not inexpensive goals. However, we believe they both should be considered by the city. They also further at least two of the council's goals listed on the city webpage: Expand Sustainability Efforts and Encourage Healthy Lifestyles.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the bike box removal and staff's consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,

Ames Bicycle Coalition

Carol Williams, Engineering and Policy Chair.