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To: Municipal Services Committee
From: Eric S. Lom, City Traffic Engineer
Date: November 3, 2020
Re: Recommendation to Modify Location for Wisconsin Av 2021 Enhanced Pedestrian Crossing

The Mayor's 2021 Executive Budget includes funding for an enhanced pedestrian crossing across Wisconsin Avenue in the area between Mason Street and Richmond Street. The specific location for the crossing is currently identified as Story Street, which was based on high-level planning efforts from many years ago. However, as we have been working through the detailed design, we ran into some issues related to bicycle connectivity.

The larger picture is that the proposed Story St/Bennett St bike route is intended to be the north/south alternative for bikers in this area since Richmond St is obviously not a desirable route. Since Story St ends at Wisconsin Av, we need to switch bikers over to Bennett St at some point. There are some good reasons for having the crossing at Story Street, such as the fact that Story St perfectly bisects the stretch of Wisconsin between the signals at Mason and at Richmond. The Story St location, for this reason, would be ideal for pedestrians, since it would minimize the need to backtrack in any given direction.

However, what we didn't realize at the time was that this location would be problematic for bicyclists. Under the current plan, northbound bicyclists would be asked to cross Wisconsin Av, ride along the sidewalks on Wisconsin Av, and then head north on Bennett St. Due to our concerns with this concept, we brought this issue to the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee* (BPAC). The members felt strongly that if we were to build the crossing at Story Street, most bicyclists would simply not use the designated crossing, and instead cross at Bennett St, largely defeating the purpose of the investment.

So, based on our design work and on the unanimous feedback from the BPAC, we are proposing to move the crossing to the Bennett intersection. This location would be much cleaner and would function much better for the vast majority of users. The only downside is that would be "off-center" on this uncontrolled stretch of Wisconsin Av. All things considered, we believe the new design would be much better.

