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For Immediate Release

Contact: Mike Wiza, Mayor

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STATEMENT BY MAYOR WIZA REGARDING REFERENDUM RESULTS

Leadership is not always about "standing your ground". I believe leadership is about recognizing that your idea isn't always the best and making decisions based on what is good for the whole.

This morning we see our community divided. Divided over a road, ironically named Division Street.

Business 51 can be split into three major sections. The northern section is predominantly commercial from our north boundary to about Fourth Avenue. The middle section is almost exclusively residential from Fourth Avenue to roughly Patch Street and the final southern third, again, commercial. I believe each section has specific needs and each has room for improvements, but they are not all the same.

I intend to seek council approval at next Monday's meeting to authorize the funding to have AECOM to take a step back and provide us with a new design that will still meet the Wisconsin Department of Transportation minimum standards, but keep the northern and southern commercial sections four lanes with the center residential section being reduced to one lane in each direction and a turn lane in the middle. The "lane reduction" design. There will need to be some right of way acquisition, especially in the southern section to meet the DOT minimum lane widths, roughly one foot for each lane, but not the large amounts required to meet the DOT recommendations.

Keeping four lanes will still allow for safety improvements, like reducing the number of potential conflict points and straightening intersections. The most critical section for pedestrian safety improvements is that residential middle and by reducing the lanes there, you will slow down traffic and allow space for a wider separation between street and sidewalk traffic. Additionally, we would remove the roundabout at Fourth and Division.

You might be thinking, what about that 3.5 million dollar grant we already got, won't we lose it? Maybe. I intend to present the new design to the DOT with our reasoning as to why we're changing it. I'll show that we are still making significant safety improvements but this design will also be addressing the concerns of our business community and citizens. The DOT may still allow us the grant, but if they don't we'll apply again. There are other opportunities for grants. I would much rather return 3.5 million dollars than make a 50-million-dollar mistake.

Let's put our differences on hold, get everyone back to the table and do this project right.

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