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MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES A \$5 MILLION TO SUPPORT CREATION OF TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT ON HIGH-RIDERSHIP BUS CORRIDORS

New bus "slow zone" initiative will also help speed bus service on popular routes

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced that as part of his 2019 proposed budget, the City is allocating \$5 million to support his plan to create transit-oriented development on high capacity bus corridors - starting with the South and West Sides. The new investment intended to eliminate bus "slow zones" at bottle-neck intersections will begin to be rolled out in the spring, starting with the #79 79th Street and the #66 Chicago Avenue lines, the City's two highest ridership bus lines. It will also include improvements that support pedestrian safety and overall traffic flow for all vehicles.

"Chicago has been a national leader in transit-oriented development, and these improvements will help make Chicago the first city to look at a citywide plan specifically around buses," Mayor Emanuel said. "It's a smart way to strengthen smart growth in our city and enhance the way we live, work and get around Chicago."

In June Mayor Emanuel announced his plan to expand the City's transit-oriented development policy to include high-ridership, high-frequency CTA bus routes. Originally introduced in 2013, Chicago's TOD policy supports development around Chicago's train lines to both encourage lower carbon transportation choices and reduce household costs associated with car ownership. The expanded policy would make Chicago the first city to pursue a citywide transit-oriented development policy around buses.

The expansion of transit-oriented development incentives, which are being developed by the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and the Department of Planning and Development, will be targeted to enhance development around busy bus corridors and key bus-bus and bus-rail connections, supporting the expansion of affordable housing options and complementing other commercial development initiatives like the nearby Retail Thrive Zones on Chicago and 79th.

As part of that effort, this funding will make investments such as installing designated bus lanes on approaches to certain intersections and new pavement marking and signage, optimizing the location of bus stops and include other operational and safety improvements such as curb extensions. The short-term improvements will be implemented in advance of future longer-term improvements that will require additional engineering and community engagement.

The #79 79th Street, with 7.8 million rides in 2017, and #66 Chicago Avenue, with 6.9 million rides, were selected for the initial improvements based on CTA and CDOT studies that looked at a host of factors, including service coverage, ridership, operations, population/employment and feasibility. The #66 and the #79 were seen as offering the highest potential benefit to riders.

“Improving the speed and reliability of bus service has been one of my top priorities, and this new funding will help us accomplish that goal on two of our busiest routes,” said CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr.

“By making these targeted investments, our goal is to speed up bus service, improve reliability, increase ridership and customer satisfaction and lower costs for the CTA,” CDOT Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld said. “By doing a better job of organizing bus movements, we can also improve pedestrian safety and the overall traffic flows on Chicago Avenue and 79th Street.”

In addition to the work on 79th and Chicago Avenue, additional targeted investments may also be identified on other corridors included in the Mayor’s proposal to extend transit oriented-development for buses, for example on Western and Ashland. Since announcing his proposal in June, the City has been examining a number of high capacity bus corridors for potential to extend existing density bonuses and reduced parking requirements to new developments adjacent to Chicago’s transit assets.

CDOT will work with CTA and the Mayor’s Office to identify further locations for infrastructure improvements. The Mayor’s full proposal to expand transit-oriented development incentives will be introduced to the City Council in December.

CDOT was also recently awarded \$800,000 through the Cook County Invest in Cook competitive funding program to conduct preliminary engineering of transit operations and pedestrian safety improvements for Chicago Avenue between Ogden Avenue and Lake Shore Drive, and 79th Street between State Street and Stony Island Avenue. This design effort will continue the work necessary to implement longer-term corridor-wide improvements on Chicago Avenue and 79th Street.

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