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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES CTA TO PROVIDE REAR DOOR BOARDING,
NEW SYSTEM TO REDUCE CROWDING ON ALL BUSES**

New measures will encourage social distancing and limit the number of riders per bus to further prevent the spread of COVID-19

As part of ongoing efforts to protect the health and safety for transit customers and CTA front-line employees during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) today announced rear-door boarding and operational changes for buses starting Thursday, April 9. Designed to promote social distancing among customers and CTA bus operators who are essential to keeping the CTA and the City of Chicago moving, the new and temporary changes will remain in effect until further notice. In addition to CTA employees and the city's first responders who rely on public transportation to get to work every day, these new measures will also further protect Chicago's transit customers, particularly those on the South and West Sides of Chicago, who represent the highest level of ridership across the system during the stay at home order.

"While this is an extremely difficult time for all of us, I am heartened by the resilience of our bus and train operators who our communities rely on every day for transportation, especially our South and West Side neighborhoods that have been hit the hardest by this pandemic," said Mayor Lightfoot. "With these new measures, we're further ensuring the health and safety of not only our most vulnerable residents but also our CTA employees, who are transporting our police officers, firefighters, paramedics and healthcare workers from the frontlines of this fight to their homes."

During this time, when CTA buses pull up to stops, customers will be directed to the rear doors to board. Customers using a mobility device or individuals who require the bus to use the ramp or lower (kneel) will still use the front door. This latest effort by the CTA aligns with guidance by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encouraging passengers in major cities to enter and exit the bus through rear entry doors.



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“Public transit is an essential service on which Chicagoans depend, including healthcare workers, emergency responders and many others who rely on transit to make ends meet,” said CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. “This is one of many measures we have taken to better protect our riders as well as our employees, whose commitment and dedication have helped to keep Chicago moving throughout this crisis.”

To allow for fare payment, CTA is moving farecard readers (tap devices) to the rear doors of buses. While a number of buses already have the readers at their rear doors, more buses will receive them in the coming weeks. During the transition, CTA will not enforce fare payment on buses that do not yet have rear-door farecard readers.

“Allowing rear door boarding on CTA buses is a critical step against COVID-19 to protect frontline transit workers and riders making essential travel,” said Active Transportation Alliance Executive Director Amy Rynell. “Thank you to Mayor Lightfoot, CTA, and transit workers for keeping Chicago moving. Chicagoans must do our part by social distancing on buses and trains and staying home as much as possible.”

Signs will be posted on the front of all buses directing customers to enter through the rear door and any customers who need the bus to be lowered or the ramp deployed can signal to the driver for assistance at the front door. To board via rear doors, customers will be required to manually open the doors from outside the bus since most CTA buses do not have the ability for operators to open the rear doors automatically.

As part of the agency’s precautionary measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19, CTA is also introducing bus crowding management, giving bus operators authority to run as “drop-off only” and bypass certain bus stops if their bus is becoming crowded. Operators will use the guideline of 15 or more passengers on a standard 40-foot bus, 22 or more passengers on a 60-foot articulated bus.

Crowd management efforts will allow for social distancing and will reinforce the need for riders to limit their travel on the CTA for essential trips only and to consider leaving early, later or alternating their commutes. CTA already uses this = practice as a service restoration technique—a way to ensure that buses maintain optimal intervals to meet customer demand and avoid bus bunching and big service gaps. This practice is similar in concept to what retail/grocery stores are doing: regulating the number of customers inside the building at one time. In effect, this measure may require buses to run express for a portion of their route. Any stops



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that a bus passes up will be served by the next bus following on that route. Buses will make all stops requested by customers who wish to get off a bus.

Customers using CTA for travel other than work are strongly encouraged to plan essential trips outside the traditional peak rush periods (7-9:30AM and 3:30-6PM) and to allow for extra travel time.

The introduction of rear-door boarding and bus crowding management are the latest steps CTA has taken to promote social distancing. CTA has been running as much service as possible, to provide ample space for customers to spread out on vehicles. CTA has also added posters to all buses, rail cars and on station/platform displays promoting and encouraging social distancing whenever possible.

CTA also continues its rigorous cleaning schedule for vehicles and rail stations, which is among the strongest in the transit industry. Currently, all vehicles and stations receive daily cleanings, which includes disinfecting commonly touched surfaces multiple times a day—seats, handrails, stanchions, Ventra vending machines, etc.—and more-concentrated spot cleanings, as needed. These are in addition to regular vehicle deep cleans, which entail intensive cleanings of the interior and exterior surfaces.

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