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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 8, 2017

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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES MAJOR INCREASE IN WHEELCHAIR-ACCESSIBLE
TRANSIT OPTIONS FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS THROUGHOUT CHICAGO**

*Number of Accessible Taxis Has More than Tripled from 91 to 298 Since Mayor Emanuel Took Office;
Rideshare Industry to Add 50 Additional Wheelchair-Accessible Vehicles by End of Year*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced a major increase in the availability of wheelchair-accessible transit options for Chicago residents and visitors. Since the Mayor took office, the city has tripled the number Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) from 91 to 298, with 130 WAV taxicabs added since January 1, 2016. This progress keeps the city on track to reach the Emanuel Administration's goal of 400 wheelchair-accessible taxicabs in 2018.

To keep the progress going, the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) has approved plans from Uber, Lyft and VIA to enhance service to customers with disabilities. Under the plans, the transportation network providers (TNPs, also known as rideshares) will bring an additional 50 wheelchair-accessible vehicles online and available to Chicago's residents and visitors within the next six months.

"Every Chicagoan deserves access to safe, reliable transit," Mayor Emanuel said. "Major innovations are taking place in the public passenger vehicle and transportation network provider industries, and the city of Chicago recognizes the hard work of industry, advocates and aldermen to make this a reality."

The City's Accessibility Fund, which is supported by fees paid by the taxi and TNP industries, has driven much of the progress seen to date. In 2012, the city of Chicago began offering a \$15,000-\$20,000 incentive to convert a vehicle to a WAV taxicab or purchase a factory-built WAV taxicab to increase the number of wheelchair-accessible taxicabs in Chicago. In 2016, the city of Chicago created new incentives, including: (1) an elimination of a fee charged to Wheelchair-Accessible Vehicle (WAV) medallion holders for dispatch service, (2) a \$10,000 "early bird" incentive to medallion owners that purchased WAV taxicabs in 2016, and (3) up to \$5,000 in an annual grant for WAV taxicab owners for vehicle maintenance, among others.

Due to reforms enacted as part of Mayor Emanuel's 2016 budget, the City's Accessibility Fund receives approximately \$6.5 million annually to fully support the Administration's accessibility goals. In 2017 alone, BACP has already disbursed more than \$1.5 million year-to-date in these funds to support an increase in wheelchair-accessible vehicle options. This has supported 45 WAV taxicab conversions, the purchase of 18 new factory-built WAV taxicabs, 50 "early bird" incentives for WAV

taxicabs purchased in 2016, and maintenance on 37 WAV taxicabs. Since Mayor Emanuel took office, the number of WAV taxicabs operating in Chicago has increased from 91 to 298, more than tripling the total number in the city's fleet.

In June 2016, Chicago City Council passed reforms that required TNPs to submit plans to enhance service to customers with disabilities. In January 2017, Uber, Lyft and VIA submitted their plans for review, which have now been approved by BACP in consultation with MOPD. The companies now have six months to implement them. The city will re-evaluate the plans on an ongoing basis to ensure that customer demand is met going forward.

Using these companies' apps, residents will soon be able to secure rides from additional wheelchair-accessible vehicles that will be brought online and more efficiently connect to the city's nearly 300 existing available WAV taxicabs. The addition of 50 wheelchair-accessible vehicles over the next six months by the TNP industry mirrors the rate at which WAV taxicabs were being added to the city's fleet as of early 2017.

"The Mayor's hard work to increase the number of wheelchair accessible options is paying off," BACP Commissioner Samantha Fields said. "The City of Chicago will always remain committed to working with industry to ensure robust service to members of the disability community."

"Chicago is leading the way to create more accessible transportation options for people with disabilities," MOPD Commissioner Karen Tamley said. "The disability community will soon be able to rely on both taxis and rideshare companies for wheelchair-accessible transportation service."

In 2016, Mayor Emanuel and the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) announced that Open Doors Organization had been selected after a competitive bidding process to provide centralized wheelchair-accessible taxicab dispatch service to passengers across Chicago. The move further improves services for people with disabilities and increases safe and reliable transportation options for people who use wheelchairs. In 2017, nearly 29,000 trips have been taken through Open Doors year-to-date. More than 63,000 trips were taken through Open Doors in 2016, up from over 34,000 trips provided in 2015.

Recent data from taxis and rideshare companies showed that trips throughout Chicago reached record highs in 2016.

In 2016 the total number of trips from the taxi and TNP industries was approximately 77.5 million. This amounts to a 287 percent increase over 2013, when the total number of trips was approximately 27 million.

In November 2015, the City of Chicago authorized licensed TNP pick-ups at the airports. This resulted in more choice for consumers and more trips provided. In 2016 alone, approximately 8.6 million airport trips were provided by the taxi and rideshare industries combined compared to approximately 6.3 million in 2015.

Additionally, over the past several years, Chicago has witnessed significant change in the ground transportation industry. More than 80 percent of taxis are now alternative fuel or fuel-efficient

vehicles, the number of wheelchair-accessible taxis has more than doubled since 2011, and residents have access to universal taxi app service.

BACP oversees the licensing of Chicago's public chauffeurs and public vehicles including TNPs, taxicabs, liveries, charter and site seeing buses, horse drawn carriages, ambulances, water taxis and tour boats. The department also oversees the purchasing of taxicab medallions, vehicle inspections and rates of fare. Learn more about BACP's at www.cityofchicago.org/BACP.

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