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**CITY COUNCIL PASSES ORDINANCE EXPANDING REGULATORY RELIEF FOR
BUSINESSES IMPACTED BY COVID-19**

Legislation will further defer license expirations and extend programs that support outdoor dining

CHICAGO – Today, City Council passed an ordinance introduced by Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) Commissioner Rosa Escareno that will extend critical regulatory relief measures for businesses that continue to be impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Under the legislation, the City will extend temporary relief efforts that were implemented this year into 2021 by further delaying license expiration dates, expanding critical sidewalk café reforms and extending the innovative Expanded Outdoor Dining Program. These efforts build on Mayor Lightfoot's commitment to support businesses throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, including through a cap on third-party delivery fees, which passed City Council last month, and the Chicago Hospitality Grant Program, which awarded \$10 million in grants this week.

“Chicago’s businesses have dealt with so much throughout the COVID-19 crisis and they have stepped up to keep our community safe and healthy,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “My administration is committed to doing everything we can to remove regulatory burdens and make sure that the City is aiding the recovery efforts. The extension of these measures will provide critical emergency relief to tens of thousands of Chicago’s businesses.”

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the City has made a number of regulatory changes that have temporarily eased the impact of the crisis on Chicago’s businesses. Chief among these have been the extension of license expiration dates. The ordinance that passed today will expand this program into 2021 – every business and public vehicle license that has expired or will expire between March 15, 2020 and June 15, 2021 will be considered active and individuals and businesses would have until July 15, 2021 to renew their licenses. This will allow tens of thousands of businesses to continue operating without the burden of a license renewal.

“Small businesses are economic engines and job builders across our neighborhoods, and we must continue doing everything we can to support our business community and kickstart our marketplace,” said BACP Commissioner Rosa Escareno. “With these measures,



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we are making sure that Chicago's businesses can operate through the winter and start the coming year without worrying about their license expiring or other regulatory burdens that may get in the way."

In recognition of the critical importance of outdoor service for bars and restaurants during the COVID-19 pandemic, Mayor Lightfoot created the innovative Expanded Outdoor Dining Program in June. To date, 450 bars and restaurants have operated outside in private parking lots, on the sidewalk or in closed streets through this crucial program. Under the ordinance that passed today, this program, which is administered by BACP, the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Consumer Protection (DCASE), will be extended through the end of 2021.

"Our Expanded Outdoor Dining program has been a lifeline for hundreds of Chicago restaurants and proved to be a good way to reimagine the use of our public way for new purposes," said CDOT Commissioner Gia Biagi. "By extending the program, we can continue to support our vital restaurant industry and neighborhood businesses while offering safe, inviting destinations for residents."

In June, Mayor Lightfoot introduced and City Council passed temporary reforms to the 2020 Sidewalk Café permitting process, making it faster, cheaper and easier than ever for restaurants to operate outdoors. The new ordinance will extend these reforms to apply to the 2021 café season as well. Now, all Sidewalk Café Permits issued in 2021 will have the option to extend in front of a neighboring establishment and benefit from a 75% reduction in permit fee. Additionally, the more than 1,000 existing Sidewalk Café Permits that are set to expire on February 28, 2021 will be considered active until June 1st, allowing continued operation for three extra months this spring without renewing.

"Our neighborhood small businesses are vital to the well-being of our community now and into the future," said Nedra Sims Fears, Executive Director of the Greater Chatham Initiative. "In Greater Chatham and in neighborhoods throughout the city, our small businesses need support now more than ever. I thank Mayor Lightfoot for her leadership delivering critical reliefs and ask all Chicagoans that have the means to support their local businesses this holiday season."

In addition to the introduction of the regulatory relief package, this week the City distributed \$10 million in grants to nearly 1,000 bars and restaurants through the Chicago Hospitality Grant Program. Additionally, last month, City Council passed an emergency measure to cap the fees that third party-delivery companies can charge restaurants for their service. Under this legislation, which went into effect November 24th, fees that third-party delivery companies can charge for their delivery services will be capped at 10 percent of the purchasing price, and total fees charged to participating restaurants, which include the delivery fees, will be capped at 15 percent. This fee cap and the Hospitality



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Grant Program make up part of Mayor Lightfoot’s emergency hospitality relief package that was announced last month.

“As Chairman of the Committee on License and Consumer Protection, I see how important it is to make sure that the City’s regulations do not have a detrimental impact on our small businesses,” said Emma Mitts, Alderman of the 37th Ward. “These measures will provide critical supports to businesses during this incredibly challenging time.”

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