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**CITY COUNCIL APPROVES ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH MOBILE MERCHANT
LICENSE FOR INNOVATIVE BUSINESS TYPES**

*New legislation establishes first-of-its-kind permanent licensing for mobile merchants
and expands operating time for food trucks*

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago City Council today passed an ordinance to establish permanent licensing for mobile merchants and expand operating times for food trucks across Chicago. This first-of-its-kind license is the latest in Mayor Lightfoot's ongoing efforts to reduce red tape, improve services for small businesses and support innovative business types and creative owners.

"Chicago was built by small and innovative businesses more than 180 years ago, and if we want to continue growing, we have to ensure they have a place in this city permanently," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Today, with this new ordinance, we are delivering on our commitments to provide innovative opportunities for existing business owners to grow, while bringing new local entrepreneurs into the marketplace."

Following today's passage at City Council, the City will now permit mobile merchants operators to obtain a \$250, two-year license from the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) starting February 1st. Previously operating under a temporary Emerging Business Permit, entrepreneurs that sell non-food merchandise from within a mobile vehicle will now have a permanent licensing category under which to operate.

"At BACP, we are committed to opening doors for small businesses and adapting our regulations to fit a changing economy," said BACP Commissioner Rosa Escareno. "There is room in Chicago for all types of businesses, and the new permanent license created under Mayor Lightfoot's leadership demonstrates our inclusivity, flexibility and willingness to listen."

This renewable license will allow operators to sell non-food merchandise from within a mobile vehicle between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. from a legal parking spot. To encourage business activity, these mobile merchants will now be permitted to



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operate for four hours at one location under the license, subject to posted parking regulations, up from the two-hour limit in the current Emerging Business Permit.

“As Chairman of the City Council License & Consumer Protection Committee and Alderman of the 37th Ward, I am a fervent believer in building regulations that support innovative and experimental businesses,” said 37th Ward Alderman Emma Mitts. “I thank Mayor Lightfoot and BACP for recognizing the contributions of these inventive entrepreneurs and creating a permanent license that supports our creative business owners.”

In addition to the new regulations for mobile merchants, the ordinance will also increase the operating time frame for food trucks from the current two-hour limit to allow for continuous operations in the same location for up to four hours at a time, subject to posted parking regulations. Other rules governing food trucks will not change, including the requirement not to park within 200 feet of any restaurant. These new regulations represent the City’s ongoing working relationship and commitment to the food truck industry, restaurant groups and other stakeholders.

“I have supported this concept from day one and am proud to welcome innovation in the 7th Ward and throughout Chicago,” said 7th Ward Alderman Gregory Mitchell. “With mobile merchant operators in my ward, I have seen firsthand how these businesses contribute to commercial corridors and I am excited to welcome them to Chicago permanently.”

“We thank our colleagues at BACP, who have been partnering with us for over a year to find this solution,” said 43rd Ward Alderman Michele Smith. “Creating more flexibility and allowing small businesses to test out prospective locations before committing to a brick-and-mortar store will have benefits for all Chicago - and will likely help mitigate the storefront vacancies that persist in today’s challenging retail environment.”

The Emerging Business Permit allows for emerging and innovative business concepts that fall outside of BACP’s traditional regulatory structure to safely operate on a pilot basis. Mobile Merchants were originally licensed under this Permit in 2016, with the four current permits set to expire at the end of January 2020.

“Through the Emerging Business Permit, the City allowed me to operate my business under a pilot program instead of turning me away,” said Juana Ryan, owner of StellaLily. “I am excited for the opportunity to operate under a permanent license and want to thank Mayor Lightfoot and BACP for expanding the operating hours to make it easier for me to succeed.”



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This first-of-its-kind license is the latest in Mayor Lightfoot’s ongoing efforts to reduce red tape and improve services for small businesses. As part of Mayor Lightfoot’s 2020 Budget passed last fall, five Regional Small Business Centers will be established this year to provide residents with easy access to business licensing support and information in their communities. Additionally, starting March 1, 2020, the Fast-Track Business Sign Program will remove barriers to obtaining a sign permit by allowing businesses to apply for basic on-premise signs at the same time as their business license.

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