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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT INTRODUCES AMENDMENT EXTENDING CITY'S MBE/WBE  
CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM**

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today introduced an amendment to extend the City's Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise Construction program through December 2027. The program has been in place to ensure that that minority-owned business enterprises (MBEs) and women-owned business enterprises (WBEs) have equal access to contracting opportunities with the City of Chicago.

"As an incredibly diverse city, it is important for us to have an equally diverse business community," said Mayor Lightfoot. "The original and brand-new components of this program will create even more pathways for diverse firms to do business and find success here in Chicago. By giving our MBEs and WBEs opportunities to thrive, we will not only help their owners and the communities they serve build generational wealth but put our city on the fast track to becoming more equitable and inclusive."

It is the policy of the City that MBEs and WBEs are provided a level playing field and that equal access is provided to all contractors and subcontractors to participate in contracting opportunities financed with City funds. Prime contractors submit a compliance plan with their bid submissions on how they plan to use these local diverse firms to meet participation goals. These goals are contract-specific, based on the availability of MBEs and WBEs within designated areas of specialty.

Under the proposed ordinance, participation goals for locally funded construction projects will remain 26 percent for MBEs and six percent for WBEs. In addition to the retention of participation goals, today's introduction includes the following additional proposed changes to the business size and personal net worth caps on businesses participating in the Program:

- Revising the definition of a "small business" to better reflect the prevalence of larger companies in the local market by increasing the upper limit of business size for MBE



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and WBE firms to include businesses up to 150% of the applicable Small Business Administration size standard and increasing the interval over which the firm's average gross receipts are calculated to seven years from five.

- Revising the calculation of the Personal Net Worth limit to exclude a number of illiquid assets, such as retirement savings, real estate, and the owner's interest in non-certified businesses in an effort to better reflect the financial challenges that small business owners face and to allow owners of MBE and WBE firms the same flexibility in arranging their financial affairs as are enjoyed by the owners of non-certified firms.

Recognizing the economic impact of government contracting, this Administration places the highest priority on the utilization of minority, women-owned, and disadvantaged businesses on City projects, especially at a time when this City is embarking on a \$3.7B Capital Plan and \$8B in improvements at O'Hare Airport, among other significant projects Citywide. Comprehensive and consistent outreach, education, and support for local, small, minority, and women-owned businesses and proactive partnerships, paired with strong enforcement of contract goals and commitments, are critical to these efforts.

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