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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT INTRODUCES LATEST MEASURES TO SUPPORT OUTDOOR DINING IN PHASE THREE

Ordinance introduced today will remove regulatory burdens and reduce fees for outdoor dining; Builds on the City's ongoing efforts to support businesses during phase three

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot along with the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) and Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) today introduced an ordinance to remove regulatory burdens and provide financial relief to restaurants seeking to operate outdoors during phase three of the City's 'Protecting Chicago' re-opening framework 'Cautiously Reopen.' Building on efforts to support local businesses impacted by COVID-19, the proposed ordinance will reduce fees, expand the opportunity for revenue and expedite the permitting process for Sidewalk Cafes while removing a regulatory burden for the new Expanded Outdoor Dining Permits.

The support measure was passed by the Committee on Transportation and Public Way today and will be considered by the full City Council on Wednesday, June 17.

"Chicago's neighborhood businesses have been deeply impacted by the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis, and it's our job to do everything we can to help them thrive," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Chicago's 'Our Streets' program offers new and lasting support in how we live and experience our neighborhoods in ways that enhance our communities and strengthen our bonds with each other. By removing regulatory burdens and providing the necessary relief these establishments need, we can further reinvigorate our communities on Chicago's road to recovery."

As part of phase three, establishments that serve food may reopen for outdoor dining and drinking. The City's Sidewalk Café permits have long been an option for restaurants looking to operate on the sidewalk directly in front of or adjacent to their establishment, and today's proposed ordinance is a life-line to help many businesses that may not currently have an option for outdoor dining. This proposal is designed to make it easier than ever to acquire a Sidewalk Café permit.



Under the proposed ordinance, the following measures would be taken to remove regulatory burdens and ensure establishments can operate as quickly and safely as possible:

- **Reduce the fees for Sidewalk Café permits by 75%**, which would apply retroactively to all permits issued this year. Businesses who have already been granted a permit will receive a refund.
- **Extend the boundaries of Sidewalk Café** into the public way in front of a neighboring establishment, provided that the neighbor is not a retail food or liquor establishment. Cafes must extend continuously, cannot block the door or window of a neighboring property, and plans for extended cafes must be submitted as part of the application, with insurance coverage including the entire extended footprint.
- **Expedite the permit process** by removing the requirement for Sidewalk Café permit applications to be submitted to City Council before issuance. This will preserve the local alderman's ability to review applications on the front end while removing a regulatory burden that can add 30 days to the issuance timeline.

BACP has already issued over 400 sidewalk cafes in 2020, with an additional 670 approved and in the final stages of issuance. While their offices are closed to the public, BACP continues to operate remotely to receive and process applications - [click here](#) for more information.

“Sidewalk cafes have long been a fundamental part of Chicago’s vibrant dining scene, and are now essential to reopening restaurants at this critical time,” said Rosa Escareno, BACP Commissioner. “As we cautiously reopen, these important changes will make it easier than ever for restaurateurs throughout Chicago to open up quickly and safely. I look forward to continuing to work with our business community to ease regulations, simplify processes and reopen our city.”

The newly proposed ordinance was created specifically to foster outdoor dining, while also supporting the need for social distancing and maintaining adequate space on the City’s sidewalks for pedestrians and ADA compliance as Chicago cautiously reopens under phase three. In addition to the option for sidewalk cafes, businesses with valid Retail Food Establishment Licenses can temporarily expand operations into the street or other private property through the new Expanded Outdoor Dining Permit. This permit is part of the City’s “Our Streets” plan and is processed by CDOT, the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) and BACP. Applicants for street closures can be submitted by a Chamber of Commerce, Special Service Area Agency, Business Association, or three (3) or more restaurants. Individual



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restaurants with their own parking lots may apply by themselves to expand into their own or a nearby private lot.

“Through the ‘Our Streets’ program, CDOT is working to create a little more shared, safe space in our communities that makes it easier to maintain social distancing while outside, provides safe and healthy ways to reach jobs and services, and helps restart critical parts of our economy,” said Gia Biagi, CDOT Commissioner. “The Expanded Outdoor Dining permit is one way we can help the restaurant industry in Chicago get back on its feet as we cautiously reopen the City.”

Over the past several weeks, the City has worked in partnership with local business organizations and restaurant owners to implement the City’s Open Streets program in identified pilot areas and to adapt to the needs of the local businesses in each location to ensure the City doesn’t take a one-size-fits-all approach to each neighborhood. The City is excited to announce that the Expanded Outdoor Dining Permit will be used to close the streets and leverage the public way for outdoor dining at the first three pilot areas within the next 7-10 days:

- Lakeview – Broadway from Belmont Avenue to Diversey Parkway
- Rush & Division – Rush Street from Oak Street to Cedar Street
- Chatham – 75th Street from King Drive to Prairie Avenue

The Lakeview and Rush & Division pilot areas are planning to open for outdoor dining this weekend, with streets at those locations closed beginning tomorrow morning. The City continues to work with businesses and organizations in the other pilot areas and at locations throughout our neighborhoods to close streets for dining as quickly as possible while addressing the individual needs of communities and businesses. Additionally, the City has approved the first permits for individual restaurants to expand their outdoor dining into private property throughout the city. Interested chambers, Special Service Area Agencies, business service organizations and restaurants can learn more and apply [here](#).

“As we begin to cautiously reopen, restaurants throughout the city need to be given the opportunity to operate outside quickly and safely,” said Sam Toia, President & CEO of the Illinois Restaurant Association. “With a streamlined Sidewalk Café process along with the Expanded Outdoor Dining Permit, the City is taking clear actions to roll out creative outdoor dining solutions. Expediting the permitting process will support our world-class restaurant community during this challenging time.”

As a part of the application, establishments that serve liquor must submit a valid Special Event Liquor License from BACP. Under the current Chicago Municipal Code, those licenses expire after eleven days. To allow for continued operating under the



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Expanded Outdoor Dining Permit, today's proposed ordinance will extend the term to 180 days for any Special Event Liquor License issued under the Expanded Outdoor Dining Permit Program. This will allow establishments to continue serving liquor under the program without having to renew their liquor license every eleven days.

"As the city begins to reopen, we need to pursue every opportunity to remove red tape and eliminate regulatory hurdles for businesses," said Howard Brookins, Jr., 21st Ward Alderman and Chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Public Way. "The City must ensure that we are not a burden on businesses, and today's efforts will make it much easier for restaurants throughout the City to open quickly, profitably and safely."

BACP, CDOT and DCASE will be holding a series of webinars next week to provide an overview of outdoor dining options for restaurants. Learn more by visiting chicago.gov/businessworkshops.

Earlier this week, the Committee on License and Consumer Protection passed an ordinance introduced by Mayor Lightfoot to temporarily allow for the sale of to-go cocktails in a safe and responsible manner. To minimize gatherings during the cautious reopening, Chicago Department of Public Health Commissioner Dr. Allison Arwady signed a Public Health Order to restrict the sales of alcoholic liquor sales each evening. Under the updated order, liquor sales for off-site consumption via delivery or carry out must cease at 9 p.m. each evening, and liquor sales for on-site consumption via outdoor dining must end at 11 p.m.

To guide Chicago's residents and businesses during phase three, the City has developed industry-specific guidelines for seventeen different industries, including Food Services, eligible to cautiously reopen. BACP has held twelve webinars on these guidelines, with over 1,200 participants, and will continue working to educate all businesses about the reopening guidelines and business support resources during this ongoing challenge. To further ensure an ongoing line of communication, the City created the CHIBIZ alerts program last Friday, June 5, to notify Chicago's businesses of emergency situations that may impact their operations.

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