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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT INTRODUCES NEW ORDINANCE TO REFORM AND
DECRIMINALIZE CANNABIS ENFORCEMENT POLICIES BEFORE LEGALIZATION
IN 2020**

City revises enforcement rules and regulations to align with new state law; reduce penalties and fines; decriminalize for unlawful possession

CHICAGO — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot introduced a new ordinance to reform the City of Chicago's enforcement policies, and rules and regulations regarding the possession and use of cannabis to reflect its legalization in Chicago and statewide starting on Jan. 1, 2020. Under the proposed ordinance, the City's reformed policies will decriminalize small amounts of cannabis, reduce penalties and fines for unlawful possession and amend the Chicago Police Department's enforcement protocols to ensure public safety and quality of life for all residents across Chicago.

"For far too long, unjust and outdated cannabis enforcement laws have adversely and disproportionately affected Chicago's black and brown neighborhoods," said Mayor Lightfoot. "The legalization of cannabis in Illinois presents a powerful opportunity to reform our policies and right these generation-old wrongs of the past as we work to ensure a safe, fair and responsible implementation in Chicago."

As part of the City's efforts to amend antiquated cannabis policies and address the historically disproportionate impact of cannabis enforcement on minority communities, the proposed ordinance defines the following key changes:

Reduced fines for minor unlawful possession: First-time unlawful possession will result in a \$50 fine for the first offense and \$100 for any subsequent minor offenses occurring within 30 days of the first offense. Under previous regulations, which disproportionately impacted low-income communities of color, residents were subject to fines of at least \$250 and up to \$500 for first-time minor offenses and a flat fine of \$500 for any subsequent offense occurring within 30 days of the first offense. In alignment with the Illinois Controlled Substances Act, the City's regulations define minor offenses as unlawful possession of no more than 30 grams of any cannabis substance.



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Decriminalization for small amounts of cannabis: Under the proposed ordinance, current laws will be amended to replace the zero-exception rule requiring the City to impound all vehicles containing cannabis regardless of the amount. To reduce the risk of residents losing their car for possessing cannabis legally, the new ordinance will align regulations with the Illinois Controlled Substances Act.

Revised CPD enforcement protocols: To redress the impacts of past criminalization while protecting the health and safety of residents, the new ordinance will amend the Department's enforcement protocols to educate officers on the new rules set forth by the State and permit them to initiate investigations into violations of the adult use cannabis law. This includes instances of smoking or using cannabis: in any public place; in a motor vehicle; and in any place prohibited under the Smoke Free Illinois Act.

“By overturning outdated cannabis laws, Chicago’s police officers will finally have a smart, sensible and safe framework that truly prioritizes public safety of all residents in this City,” said Superintendent Johnson. “Over the coming months, the Department will be working to ensure every officer has the necessary training and tools needed to enforce these reformed laws and keep Chicago’s communities safe.”

The City is proposing these reforms to provide the Chicago Police Department with the necessary tools to initiate investigations into unlawful cannabis use in public or in a vehicle. All CPD officers will be trained on new protocols to lawfully conduct investigations and enforcement actions for any violations of the adult use cannabis law, as well as possession infractions, including possession of unsealed cannabis in a vehicle, school, childcare facility or school bus.

Additionally, the City’s departments and agencies are launching public safety and health information and education campaigns about legal, safe and responsible use of cannabis ahead of its legalization in the new year.

If approved by the City Council, the amendments to the Chicago Municipal Code will be implemented on January 1, 2020 to reflect the legalization of adult cannabis use in Illinois and to ensure Chicago Police can continue to investigate violations of State and local laws.

“The disparate cannabis prohibition and prosecution have resulted in unfair and unequal enforcement across Chicago’s communities for decades,” said Alderman Taliaferro, Chairman of the Committee on Public Safety. “I thank Mayor Lightfoot for taking action to not only reform these policies, but for working to establish a



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framework that ensures legalization empowers the black and brown communities hit hardest by the war on drugs.”

Last month, the City established its first zoning regulations for the sale of adult-use cannabis. In partnership with community advocates, business leaders, policy experts and cannabis professionals, the City continues to develop rules and regulations to guide the legalized sale and consumption of cannabis to ensure this new industry leverages and expands opportunity and social equity for Chicago's residents upon its legalization on Jan. 1, 2020.

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