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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES PLANS TO QUADRUPLE FUNDING FOR BUS PROGRAM TO ALLEVIATE CONGESTION ON CHICAGO'S MOST POPULAR ROUTES

CDOT-CTA Bus Priority Zone Program to receive more than \$20 million to support Mayor's commitment to relieve traffic blockage on Chicago's Streets

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced the City of Chicago will devote \$20 million in new funding for the Bus Priority Zone Program – a joint Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) and Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) initiative designed to improve bus travel times and make service more reliable on seven core routes. The funding increase follows Mayor Lightfoot's proposal to ease traffic congestion by implementing a new fee for ride-hailing companies, which data shows play a large role in creating traffic within the central business district. The fee places a premium on single rides, during peak periods when downtown roadways experience gridlock, and it offers a decreased fare for passengers opting for shared rides.

“Every Chicagoan deserves accessible, dependable, and affordable public transportation options that are unencumbered by traffic congestion, which impacts both our city's economy and quality of life,” said Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. “This new measure already creates transformative improvements on two major CTA bus routes, and with additional investments, we will be able to advance service on even more routes, encouraging additional Chicagoans to use our world-class system.”

Today's investment quadruples the existing \$5 million budget of the Bus Priority Zone Program which is intended to eliminate bus “slow zones” caused by bottlenecks along the city's most heavily traveled corridors. A variety of elements from a transportation “toolkit” of street treatments will be used as part of mini-projects along these corridors to give priority to public transit, and in some cases, improve pedestrian safety and traffic flow.

This announcement comes as CDOT begins work on the first element in a series of projects along 79th Street, which is served by the #79 bus route, one of the City's highest ridership routes. Among the improvements being made are two dedicated



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red CTA bus-only lanes to help move buses through the corridor more quickly, new overhead signage, and new technologies, queue jump signals, to improve traffic light timing and allow buses to move through an intersection ahead of regular traffic.

CDOT and CTA will use the \$20M to expand the Bus Priority Zone Program to other areas throughout Chicago. Corridors being considered for future or additional improvements are: Halsted Street (#8), Western Avenue (#49), Pulaski Road (#53), 63rd Street (#63), Chicago Avenue (#66), Belmont Avenue (#77) and/or 79th Street (#79). Planning for the new improvements is expected to take place in the remainder of 2019 and into early 2020, with construction work breaking ground as early as the 2021 construction season.

“Mayor Lightfoot and I have a shared commitment to improve Chicago’s public bus services,” said CTA President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. “Today’s investment demonstrates the critical importance of bus service on Chicago’s economy and as the vital role it has in the City’s robust transportation system,”

Since the launch of the Bus Priority Zone Program this spring, work has already begun on the corner of Chicago and Ogden Avenues and will be breaking ground soon on 79th Street corridor. Additional targeted investments are being made this year on Western Avenue, near the Blue Line CTA station, on Wacker Drive at LaSalle Street and Wacker at Michigan Avenue.

“By making these targeted investments, our goal is to speed up bus service, improve reliability, increase ridership and customer satisfaction and lower costs for the CTA,” Acting CDOT Commissioner Thomas Carney said. “By doing a better job of organizing the street for bus movements, we can also improve pedestrian safety and the overall traffic flows on a number of key multimodal roadways.”

Project work includes, but is not limited to, the installation of designated bus only lanes, new pavement markings, street-level and overhead signage, optimizing of bus stop locations, as well as other operational and safety improvements such as curb extensions and pedestrian refuge islands.

“Improving our City’s transportation infrastructure and reducing congestion is crucial to ensure that residents throughout Chicago are able to travel the city efficiently, but more importantly safely,” said Alderman Howard Brookins Jr., Chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Public Way. “I commend our Mayor’s plan to address congestion throughout the entire city and thank both CDOT and CTA in executing projects to make this vision a reality.”



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The \$20 million expansion of the Program was made possible with funds from the City of Chicago, Cook County and the State of Illinois, as well as \$17 million in federal funding from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program, which was recently approved by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP).

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