



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 18, 2019

**CONTACT:**

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT INTRODUCES ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH CANNABIS ZONING REQUIREMENTS AND PROMOTE EQUITY IN EXPANDING INDUSTRY**

*New ordinance creates clear guidelines for zoning of recreational dispensaries and ensuring new, equitable business growth across the city*

CHICAGO—As part of the first step to ensure cannabis legalization is implemented safely and in a way that maximizes economic opportunity across Chicago's communities, Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today introduced an ordinance to establish Chicago's first zoning regulations for the sale of adult-use cannabis. The new ordinance establishes seven cannabis zones citywide that include the entire geography of the city. The zones will initially cap the number of dispensaries to ensure an equal distribution of dispensaries across the city.

Building off the operating system under state law, this new ordinance will permit existing licensed medical dispensaries across the city to sell cannabis for recreational use to residents 21 years or older starting on Jan. 1, 2020 when recreational cannabis becomes legal in Chicago and statewide.

“This ordinance is the first of several regulatory measures to be undertaken by the City of Chicago establish the safe and responsible implementation of legalized cannabis next year,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “By working with community members, businesses, elected officials, and other partners at the local and state level, we will ensure that legalization creates both new revenues for our city and unique opportunities for entrepreneurs in communities victimized by War on Drugs to be at the forefront of developing equity and wealth from this emerging industry.”

These proposed regulations create clear application guidelines to receive zoning approval in the City, and will define distancing requirements to ensure even distribution of dispensaries and consumption sites across the city while also avoiding concentration in certain areas. The ordinance establishes that all new cannabis zoning applications will be heard by the Zoning Board of Appeals, which ensures that local residents near an applicant will have a voice in where new sites are approved to operate.



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



The City's proposed regulations define distancing requirements to ensure sites are not located near sensitive areas. As part of the proposed ordinance, zoning regulations will restrict adult-use cannabis business establishments from opening within 500 feet of a school. Recreational sales in a Residential (R) zoning district will also be prohibited.

"I am committed to working with Mayor Lightfoot and my colleagues in City Council to develop smart and effective regulations that will put Chicago's health and safety first, while also ensuring our residents benefit from the growth of this new industry," said Chairman Tom Tunney, Zoning Committee and Alderman of the 44th Ward. "This proposed ordinance is the first step and I look forward to creating ample opportunities for public engagement so that we can ensure recreational cannabis is both safely accessible and creates equity for all of our communities."

The ordinance will also include an exclusion zone in the Central Business District in which no cannabis sales will be permitted. In accordance with state law, the use of cannabis products will be prohibited in all public places citywide and by youth under 21-years-of-age.

"The City of Chicago is working to ensure that legalization of cannabis is handled safely and responsibly in all of our communities," said Alderman Matt O'Shea, 19th Ward. "Just as we've worked to keep tobacco products out of the hands of our youth, Chicago is working toward smart regulations that will ensure dispensaries are kept away from schools and family destinations to reduce access points for those under the age of 21."

Drafted in partnership with community advocates, business leaders, policy experts and cannabis professionals, the new ordinance will lay the foundation for how the City regulates this new industry and leverages it to expand wealth and social equity for Chicago's residents.

"We have a fundamental obligation as city leaders to right the wrongs of our city's past," said Alderman Emma Mitts, 37th Ward. "With this new ordinance, we're taking the first step forward towards ensuring economic opportunities as a result of legalized cannabis are funneled into Chicago's black and brown neighborhoods that have been disproportionately affected by unjust drug policies for far too long."

The initial cannabis zones include:

- North District: city limits to the north, Lake Michigan to the east, Division Street to the south and Interstate 90/94 to the west.



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

---



- Central District: Division Street to the north, Lake Michigan to the east, Interstate 55 to the south and Interstate 90/94 to the west.
- Southeast District: Interstate 55 to the north, Lake Michigan to the east, 87th Street to the south and Interstate 90/94 to the west.
- Far South District: 87th Street to the north, Lake Michigan to the east and the city limits to the south and west.
- Southwest District: Interstate 55 to the north, Interstate 90/94 to the east, 87th Street to the south and the city limits to the west.
- West District: Division Street to the north, Interstate 90/94 to the east, Interstate 55 to the south and the city limits to the west.
- Northwest District: city limits to the north, Interstate 90/94 to the east, Division Street to the south and the city limits to the west.
- Exclusion Zone: Oak Street to the north, Lake Michigan to the east, Ida B. Wells Drive to the south and LaSalle in River North and Chicago River in the Loop to the west.

With initial actions to address zoning underway, the City is simultaneously working with the State of Illinois and community partners to effectuate city policies that will promote the equitable opportunities for small and local businesses to participate in the expansion of industry. This includes working with the State's Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to deploy funding for social equity applicants, and working with the State of Illinois and Chicago's' Community Colleges to pilot training and entrepreneurship opportunities for aspiring businesspeople.

# # #