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CITY RELEASES EVALUATION OF 2019 SCOOTER PILOT AND RECOMMENDS SECOND PILOT IN 2020

Over 800,000 rides taken in four-month scooter pilot in 2019, City looks to further test the mobility options in a second pilot later in 2020

CHICAGO—Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) and the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) today released the results of the City's first-ever electric scooter pilot program which revealed more than 800,000 rides taken during a four-month period last year. The new report, conducted by the City in partnership with the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT), aimed to evaluate the impact of emerging scooter technologies on communities, existing transportation systems and, most importantly, with regard to the safety of residents and riders.

Based on the results of this evaluation, the City will recommend a second pilot in 2020 to build on last year's successes, implement lessons learned and test new solutions with a goal of identifying ways to expand access to safe, reliable and equitable mobility options for Chicago residents.

"Access to safe, accessible and reliable transportation is one of the City's top priorities because it expands equity and strengthens our residents' quality of life. While the e-scooter program holds promise, it warrants additional review to determine how we hold vendors accountable, keep Chicagoans safe and improve citywide mobility," said Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. "While the initial pilot revealed mixed results, my team will continue to bring community members and all stakeholders to the table to identify improved guidelines and gauge if the scooter program is a viable long-term solution."

Focused specifically on neighborhoods on the city's northwest and west sides, last year's e-Scooter Pilot Program launched from June 15, 2019 to Oct. 15, 2019. Ten companies were issued Emerging Business Permits through BACP to operate 250 e-scooters each, and during the timeframe, over 800,000 e-scooter trips were reported by the participating companies. The service area enabled the City to evaluate the impact of e-scooters in a diverse demographic and geographical area with variations in access to transit and other forms of mobility.

"The 2019 scooter program is an example of how a thoughtfully designed and carefully managed pilot can be used to effectively evaluate a new and innovative industry," said BACP



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Commissioner Rosa Escareno. “We learned a great deal from this pilot, including that there is significant demand for scooters as a transportation option. We look forward to a second pilot in 2020 that focuses on equity, parking solutions and safety.”

While the initial evaluation found that e-scooter technology provides transportation benefits, the pilot also demonstrated a number of different challenges associated with the program that need to be more closely studied, including sidewalk clutter, equity and company compliance. As such, the City is recommending a second pilot to address these challenges and further test the benefits of this project in other community landscapes. This second pilot is necessary to determine proper regulations for this emerging and evolving business activity that balance the mobility goals of the City with the need for safe and responsible regulations.

“The City is committed to providing equitable, accessible, affordable, sustainable and safe transportation options for all of its residents, while specifically looking to provide better options to those with limited transportation access,” said CDOT Commissioner Gia Biagi. “The Chicago Department of Transportation looks forward to continuing to study e-scooters in 2020 while implementing new tactics from information gathered following the 2019 pilot.”

Following the completion of the pilot, the City worked with community groups and stakeholders to conduct a wide-reaching and holistic evaluation based on detailed ridership data, injury reports from Chicago hospitals and feedback from residents. Key findings from the evaluation include:

- The **821,615 trips** reported during the pilot indicated it was a popular mode choice for some residents and visitors.
- E-scooters were used most frequently during the **evening rush period on weekdays and between 3 and 4 PM on weekends.**
- **77% of rides started or ended in the eastern half of the pilot area, where prolific transportation options already exist.** This result indicates that more work needs to be done to understand how e-scooters could help supplement transportation in communities with limited access to other modes of transportation.
- **Evidence of e-scooters connecting riders to transit, Divvy and reducing ride-hail trips is inconclusive.** While e-scooter ridership was concentrated in West Loop and along the Blue Line, it is unclear if e-scooters supplemented transit ridership or reduced car trips. Very low percentages of survey respondents said they rode CTA bus or rail more often, while 34% of online survey respondents indicated they used e-scooters to go to or from public transit.
- **Over the duration of the pilot, there was a significant decrease in ridership;** the last week of the pilot saw trip volumes that were half of the number of rides as during the first week. In addition, many trips were short and started and ended in the same location—evidence many riders were just trying out e-scooters for the first time.
- **59% of survey respondents** answered that shared e-scooter companies should continue operating in Chicago. However, sentiments differed between non-riders



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and riders of scooters: only 21% of non-riders supported continuing the scooter program, compared to 84% of riders.

- **192 injuries** related to scooters were reported by Chicago Hospitals during the pilot period. However, improved data collection and analysis are needed in the future to draw conclusions on the injury rates of this new mode. A future pilot will continue to emphasize the importance of safety while riding e-scooters.

“CNT applauds the City of Chicago’s commitment to rigorous analysis and community engagement to understand how e-scooters affect equitable and sustainable transportation in the city, said Jacky Grimshaw, Vice President of Government Affairs for the Center for Neighborhood Technology. “The evaluation identifies important lessons learned, for Chicago and other cities around the country, as they work to ensure that new transportation services improve mobility for those who need it most.”

To assist in the evaluation of the 2019 pilot, the City conducted a month-long public online survey, with over 12,000 respondents. The City also supported the evaluation with community feedback through stakeholder meetings, analysis of complaint data, emails to the scooter feedback email address and in-person observations of scooter riding and parking.

“Despite the strong opinions that can accompany e-scooter discussions, the city has taken a thoughtful approach to a sometimes controversial subject,” said Stefan Schaffer, City Strategist at the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). “As Chicago wrestles with its response to traffic congestion, air pollution and climate change, the e-scooter pilot gave people a popular and low-cost option to ditch their cars, which should continue.”

Extensive community and stakeholder input will remain a hallmark of the e-scooter program as the City contemplates the scope for an expanded pilot, anticipated for summer of 2020. Upcoming meetings will engage transportation advocates, representatives from the disability community, business groups, community organizations and numerous other stakeholders to determine the scope, timing and location of the second e-scooter pilot. Full trip data will also be made public on the Chicago Data Portal to support the independent analysis of the scooter program.

“While the City’s initial scooter pilot proves that additional research is certainly necessary, we received feedback from local residents about seeing the program extended in Chicago,” said Transportation Committee Chair and 21st Ward Alderman Howard Brookins, Jr. “As we work to enhance accessible and affordable transit options serving every ward, I support the conducting a second e-scooter pilot so that we can determine how this technology can promote equity and mobility options for commuters, residents, visitors and residents, particularly in areas with lower density and lack of transit options.”

Chicago is one of 25 cities selected to participate in the American Cities Climate Challenge, an effort to resource cities to take strong action to reduce pollution that contributes to climate change and impacts public health. As part of the challenge, Chicago has pledged to take bold action to reduce emissions from its transportation and building sectors. Working



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with other challenge cities and cities around the world, Chicago has explored approaches to increase access to low-carbon transportation options to give residents more choice, improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Mayor's Office, the Chicago Department of Transportation and the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection are committed to engaging all stakeholders in the development of future e-scooter policies and programs. To read the full evaluation, please visit www.chicago.gov/scooters.

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