



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 9, 2020

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT, ALDERMEN CARDENAS, SADLOWSKI-GARZA AND
RODRIGUEZ INTRODUCE ORDINANCE TO REFORM ZONING RULES THAT
PROMOTE PUBLIC HEALTH AND IMPROVE AIR QUALITY**

*Mayor Lightfoot takes first step towards cleaner air, smarter land use policies and a
more equitable economy*

CHICAGO – Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, Alderman George Cardenas (12th), Alderwoman Susan Sadlowski-Garza (10th) and Alderman Michael Rodriguez (22nd) today introduced an ordinance to improve air quality by restricting where businesses that emit air pollution may build new facilities. The changes to the Zoning Code will impose new, independent land-use review over the opening or expansion of facilities that release air pollutants, such as incinerators or factories. Once approved, residents will feel confident that they have a meaningful voice in the placement of intensive manufacturing sites in their neighborhoods. The ordinance, developed in collaboration with elected officials, environmental advocates and industry groups, strikes a reasonable balance between environmental equity and industrial development.

“To establish an economy that works for all Chicagoans and puts us on a path to equitable growth, we must ensure polluting industries do not unfairly burden certain neighborhoods with the false choice of jobs or dirty air,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “I am confident that the City of Chicago can partner with residents, environmental advocates and the business community to ensure that we can create good, high-paying jobs while also mitigating the effects of air pollution on our neighborhoods.”

The two major changes in the Air Quality & Zoning Ordinance include:

- Requiring that certain businesses, including intensive manufacturers, recyclers and freight/logistics facilities, undergo additional review and public comment before being approved to open a facility. This review ensures that the City can reasonably balance its environmental protections with a growing economy and expanding businesses.
- Establishing planned development review for major new industrial uses. Planned development review imposes additional scrutiny and public



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

comment, as well as City Council approval, for the most intensive industrial and manufacturing uses.

“The 12th Ward is home to the historic Central Manufacturing District (CMD), a strong economic asset in our city,” said Alderman Cardenas (12th Ward), Chairman of the Committee on Environmental Protection and Energy. “The CMD presents an opportunity to reimagine industrial development. This ordinance demonstrates our commitment to inclusive land-use planning and equitable economic growth. While these businesses and industries are vital to our economic vitality, by strengthening industrial permitting we are ensuring that there is a thoughtful process that examines the impact of new facilities on surrounding areas, making people and their health the top priority.”

“The 10th Ward is known for being a heavy manufacturing area, but we also want to be known as a safe and healthy place to live,” said Alderman Sadlowski-Garza (10th Ward). “I am glad that we are now making a strong stance on where new manufacturing facilities are located in our city is located and putting the health of residents is our main priority.”

“This ordinance is long overdue for the City of Chicago and is a good step forward,” said Alderman Rodriguez (22nd Ward). “We have to send a strong message to our residents that they come first and that we are doing everything in our power to ensure that new industrial facilities also place people and neighborhoods top-of-mind.”

As the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) identified in its first-ever [Air Quality and Health Report](#), Chicago continues to face below-standard air quality for ozone and fine particulate matter. Concentrations of fine particulate matter are highest near the source emitting the pollutant. As a result, the City must make sure its land is used in a way that makes sure that new polluting uses are not placed near the residents who are most vulnerable to air pollution.

“Addressing air pollution in Chicago is one of my team’s top priorities, particularly in communities with higher rates of chronic disease and social factors that make it harder for people to access care,” said Department of Public Health (CDPH) Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D. “The Air Quality and Health Report makes clear that Chicago’s residents, especially those in the West and Southeast Sides, face inequitable burdens from air pollution and this ordinance is an important step in ensuring that, one day, no Chicagoan will unfairly suffer from the effects from air pollution.”



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



In addition, Mayor Lightfoot has committed to developing an ordinance to address the cumulative burden of pollution that disproportionately affects certain neighborhoods with high rates of poverty, Black/Latinx residents, and preexisting health vulnerabilities. The City will also strengthen its air quality enforcement and inspection processes, review the other operating rules for industrial businesses, and partner with community representatives and environmental leaders to further strengthen the City's air quality protections.

"I am proud to stand with Mayor Lightfoot, Commissioner Arwady, and the co-sponsors in support of today's air quality ordinance," said Chief Sustainability Officer Angela Tovar. "These changes to the zoning ordinance are long overdue, but they are still just one small part of a larger initiative to improve air quality for all Chicagoans, no matter where they live."

The ordinance introduced today is another step in Mayor Lightfoot's larger effort to improve air quality in Chicago. In addition to releasing the Air Quality and Health Report, Mayor Lightfoot has established new, rigorous rules for large recycling facilities, and established an Environmental Equity Working Group, and will continue to develop new policies that will allow for economic growth, quality jobs, and improved air quality. For more information about the City's work to address environmental concerns, please visit [Chicago.gov/CDPH](https://www.chicago.gov/cdph).

###