



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



Dear Chicagoans,

On the campaign trail and since taking office, Chicagoans have repeatedly told me about our city's congestion crisis. Anyone who travels in the downtown area knows how much congestion costs, from the time spent waiting in traffic to the rise in traffic collisions. You asked me to do something and we did.

Recently, I announced a plan to implement new taxes on ride-hail companies like Uber and Lyft. My plan has five parts:

- Make the luxury of single-passenger trips downtown more expensive during rush hours (single trips are the most common type of ride-hail trips in higher income neighborhoods);
- Make shared trips cheaper (shared trips ease traffic congestion and are more common on the South and West sides);
- Keep public transportation affordable for all by encouraging use of CTA (which also eases congestion) where possible;
- Invest \$20 million in CTA bus priority zones that will alleviate traffic pinch points across neighborhoods on bus corridors that provide more than 48 million rides a year; and
- Use a portion of the revenue the City receives from this new tax to invest in two studies: (1) a comprehensive traffic congestion pricing study that can point to long-term policies that ease congestion city-wide and to inform a long-term traffic management plan, and (2) a thorough analysis of the ride-hail driver economy.

When ride-hailing companies entered the market, they indicated that their services would reduce the number of vehicles on the road. These companies' own data, Lyft and Uber included, show that nothing could be further from the truth. Ride-hailing companies provided more than 100 million trips last year, after growing almost threefold over the past three years. [Our own analysis](#) quantified that the companies are adding well over 600 million miles to our roads each year, contributing to infrastructure wear and tear and an increase in harmful carbon emissions and pollutants at the expense of the City and our residents.

As expected, ride-hailing companies have pushed back on these changes. You have perhaps heard that my initiative will hurt drivers, that Uber and Lyft are just a small part of the problem and that the plan will make it harder for low-income residents on the South and West sides to travel. I want to explain to you why this is not the case, and why all Chicagoans will be better served with this new policy.

Uber and Lyft are the single largest contributor to downtown congestion. The number of ride-hailing trips citywide has increased by 271 percent between 2015 and 2018, with over 50 million trips in the downtown area per year. About three out of four of these trips are taken by customers who choose a single-passenger ride. This, along with the impact of empty vehicles cruising between rides, is the main driver of downtown congestion. My plan will make the luxury of a single-passenger ride downtown more expensive during peak hours.

My plan will make shared travel less expensive between neighborhoods. Ride hailing company data shows that 9 out of 10 trips from the majority of Chicago's South and West side neighborhoods end in another neighborhood, not downtown. And the majority of these trips are shared. My new policy will decrease rates for shared trips between neighborhoods outside of the downtown area.

These changes will ensure that city programs are in place to protect drivers – both those that drive as their first source of income and those that drive part-time to make ends meet. My plan asks ride-hailing companies to be more transparent and provide previously unavailable data about driver take-home pay to help us ensure that City policies support drivers.

By adding a premium to downtown trips, particularly those with a single passenger, and making shared trips between neighborhoods cheaper, my plan will ease the plague of congestion while keeping public transportation affordable to all.

As always, I am committed to developing policies that make Chicago a better place to live, work and commute for all our residents. The changes that I announced recently are the first step in tackling traffic congestion in our city.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lori E. Lightfoot". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mayor