FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 16, 2017

CONTACT:
Mayor's Press Office
312.744.3334
press@cityofchicago.org

MAYOR EMANUEL LAUNCHES NEW OPEN DATA PORTAL
Redesign is user friendly, making data sets easier to understand and navigate

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today launched a new, redesigned open data portal to help residents better navigate City information and use it in everyday life. For example, sidewalk café permits will now be available on the portal, creating a one-stop resource for outdoor dining locations in the City.

"We are making open city government data more accessible so everyone can learn more about where they live and work," Mayor Emanuel said. "The new data portal will help residents and visitors in ways big and small, like allowing them to discover outdoor restaurant options through better access to sidewalk café permits. This is another example of our continued efforts to make data available, but also relevant to Chicagoans in unique ways."

In addition to searching all businesses licensing data already available, patrons can now go here to see restaurants and bars with sidewalk café permits. To date, there are more than 500 sidewalk café permits within the City. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, with new permits added daily as they are approved.

The open data portal promotes transparency by making raw City data available to the public. It contains over 600 data sets and receives more than 80,000 visits per month, with nearly one million visits in 2016. The redesigned website makes it easier for all Chicagoans to find facts, maps, and data about Chicago, such as restaurant inspections, business licenses, and taxi trips.

The updated data portal has several new features, including a new home page that highlights relevant information and apps, redesigned data pages that provide context for each dataset, updated exploration tools that allow you to create charts and maps more easily, and video tutorials.

Mobile device users will also be able to seamlessly use the redesigned portal on smartphones and tablets. Thirty percent of open data portal visitors are using mobile devices, with that number expected to rise. Research conducted by the Arizona State University and University of Iowa in conjunction with the City of Chicago has shown Chicagoans in low-income areas without home broadband connectivity are more likely to use mobile devices to access city services, such as the data portal, underscoring the importance of mobile accessibility.

The redesigned open data portal was released as a beta in September 2016 to get feedback from residents. The City partnered with Smart Chicago Collaborative to host a user-feedback session at Woodson Regional Library. The City also hosted feedback sessions with software developers and user experience experts to elicit feedback from a broad audience. Numerous adjustments were made based on feedback from residents and will continue to optimize the experience for all.

"Chicago was one of the earliest adopters of open data portals, and is an important part of Chicago's strategy to be a smarter city," Chief Data Officer Tom Schenk said. "City of Chicago staff have also leveraged data from the data portal to make better, more informed decisions."

Chicago's investment in open data through strategic partnerships with civic tech volunteers and startups, has also helped improve city services. By making more and more data accessible, the City has facilitated the development of numerous innovative civic applications by independent developers, such as:

- [Chicago Works](), which allows residents to make service requests to 311 and track issues as they are addressed.
- [Wasmycartowed.com](), which lets users look up their car by license plate, make, or model and find out if it has been towed or relocated.
- [http://www.vizalytics.com/MindMyBusiness](), is an iOS and Android app that provides alerts to small business on construction, traffic, 311, inspections, and other data so they can make more informed decisions to save money and create opportunities.
- [SweepAround.us](), which allows users to input their address and register for text or e-mail alerts for a reminder when their street will be swept so they can move their vehicle.

Chicago's open data portal has also provided a platform to build the city's data-driven approach to improving operations. In 2015, Chicago launched a predictive food inspection process using data from the open data portal. The model helps the City of Chicago's health inspectors prioritize their annual inspections of nearly 16,000 food establishments to ensure food safety. Leveraging the data updated daily on the portal, the predictive analytics model has increased the efficiency of city health inspectors by 25 percent, and landed the city a Top 25 Bright Idea award from Harvard University for innovation in government.

Explore the new City of Chicago open data portal at data.cityofchicago.org.

###