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**CITY OF CHICAGO
CITY COUNCIL**

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COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

SPECIAL EVENTS, CULTURAL AFFAIRS
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HEALTH AND HUMAN RELATIONS

PEDESTRIAN AND TRAFFIC SAFETY

TRANSPORTATION AND THE PUBLIC WAY

ETHICS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

COMMITTEES AND RULES

April 23, 2020

Yesterday's vote to adjourn the City Council meeting early, which I opposed, unfortunately prevented the Council from considering a package of coronavirus-related bills aimed at protecting Chicago residents. This unnecessary delay highlights the need for City Council to meet more frequently during an emergent crisis; the existing schedule, to meet once per month, is insufficient.

Therefore, on Friday, I will be introducing an ordinance to change the Council's current monthly meeting schedule to convene on a bi-monthly basis. Chicago Municipal Code already calls for City Council meetings on the second and fourth Wednesdays of every month. That schedule was written into law before Zoom, and before virtual meetings were a possibility.

My proposal applies the bi-monthly meetings requirement to designated City emergencies. In a time when we can meet at the click of a button and are literally staying at home, the ability to meet virtually presents a unique opportunity to accomplish this in a way that is convenient for all members, and for our constituents, who are also under the stay at home order.

Legislation to provide rent relief, to require employer-provided masks for essential workers, to protect restaurants from delivery service costs that threaten their livelihood - these and many more have been introduced by my colleagues in the council, but under the current process they would have to wait for the following month (at minimum) before a final vote.

Mayor Lightfoot has rightly exercised her authority to act through executive order, and the legislative branch must act equally to meet this moment. Increasing the frequency of City Council and Committee meetings allows the legislative body to adequately address the critical issues facing Chicagoans, and like Mayor Lightfoot, I welcome the opportunity for a robust debate on all related measures.

Members of City Council can better serve their constituents, and the city as a whole, by meeting more often. When we talk about saving lives, our communities cannot wait months for debate on solutions and policy implementation. The reality is, no one can afford to sit on the sidelines as events unfold. I urge the public at large to engage with their elected officials and ask them where they stand on having more City Council meetings. The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented moment for our City, and Chicago government has an obligation to respond to these challenges in an expeditious manner.

Andre Vasquez, Alderman, 40th Ward