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March 22, 2019

To: Alderman Walter Burnett, Chairman of the Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety

Chicago City Hall
121 N. LaSalle Street
Chicago IL, 60602

Dear Chairman Burnett and Members of the City Council Committee on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety:

The Active Transportation Alliance enthusiastically supports the proposed amendment of the City of Chicago's existing contract for the operation of Divvy, Chicago's highly successful bike share program. With significant investment by Lyft, this proposal would add more than 10,000 new bikes and 175 stations to the system and extend the program's service area to cover the full City of Chicago.

Active Trans has long advocated for making Divvy available in every Chicago neighborhood as part of a broader strategy to give all Chicagoans convenient and affordable access to bikes and safe places to ride. If managed properly, Divvy expansion will increase transportation options in high-need communities and boost neighborhood health, sustainability and equity. Bike share is a critical first/last mile connection to public transit in Chicago neighborhoods.

Active Trans doesn't have any preference when it comes to the system's vendors, but we believe Divvy is two-wheeled public transit and the city's bike share system should remain public, as proposed in the amendment. The public is best served when cities retain control over their transit systems, rather than turning management over to private companies and allowing them to decide where, when and how to operate.

It's critical that an expanded bike sharing system in Chicago complements – and not competes with – the existing Divvy, bus and rail networks, and retaining public control makes this more likely. Public control also better positions our transit systems to meet equity goals.

The Lyft deal is an expansion of Divvy that keeps the system under Chicago's ownership and operation. It locks in the expansion and affords better opportunities for integration with other forms of public transit. The deal allows Chicago to keep the bikes and stations at no cost when the contract ends.



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The city's process to expand bike sharing must be inclusive and equitable so it results in better bike access for all Chicagoans – not just residents in the most profitable areas. Chicago should pair bike sharing expansion with sustainable investments in safe biking and walking infrastructure, especially on the city's highest crash corridors in historically disinvested communities on the South and West Sides.

Divy expansion should come with specific community benefits, such as access to jobs for currently unemployed or underemployed residents, and investments in community-based programming.

Today, Divvy isn't working for all Chicago residents, even in areas with stations in place. Expanding bike sharing citywide presents opportunities to address barriers to bicycling beyond access to bikes, including providing new revenue for biking and walking infrastructure and addressing safety, security and cultural barriers to biking as transportation.

Chicago is a better place to live, work and visit with more people biking, walking and riding public transit. Expanding Divvy citywide with this amendment is a critical step towards embracing a truly multimodal vision for the future of Chicago's transportation network.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Burke".

Ron Burke
Active Transportation Alliance