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**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT AND CITY CLERK ANNA VALENCIA ANNOUNCE
PARTNERSHIP WITH UN WOMEN TO CREATE SAFER PUBLIC SPACES FOR
FEMALE-IDENTIFIED RESIDENTS**

CHICAGO — Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and City Clerk Anna Valencia today announced a partnership with UN Women's Global Flagship Program, *Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces*. The initiative responds to sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces. Chicago joins 53 other cities from 32 countries in its partnership with UN Women, including Quito, Ecuador; Cairo, Egypt; London, UK; and New York City. The initiative responds to sexual violence against women, female-identified residents, and girls in public spaces.

"Partnering with the UN Women's Global Flagship Program is an important step forward in our citywide mission to protect residents who identify as female," said Mayor Lightfoot. "Preventing gender-based violence is a core part of our public safety strategy and necessary to achieve in order to create a safer Chicago. Through this partnership, we will be able to better respond to incidents of violence against women, as well as stop them from happening in the first place."

The partnership aligns with the City's Citywide Strategic Plan to address Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Human Trafficking, published in September 2021. In Chicago, between 2018 and 2021, there were 908 reported criminal sexual assaults to the Chicago Police Department (CPD) that happened in a public space such as on the street, in an alley or an abandoned building. According to the US Department of Justice's National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), only 310 out of 1,000 sexual assaults are reported to the police.

"I am grateful for this partnership with the UN Women *Safe Cities* initiative to end sexual violence and improve the safety of our public spaces in Chicago. This partnership builds upon the important work our office has previously done through the Status of Women and Girls (SWAG) initiative and The Pink New Deal since 2018," remarked Clerk Valencia. "Chicago's women and young girls are looking to us to act now. This is one additional tool that we can utilize to build upon the important work already being done in this space. This working group will



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provide us as leaders with updated data and research to craft equitable policies that address the root causes of violence against women and girls, creating a safer Chicago for all."

The first step in the *Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces* program includes conducting a scoping study that provides essential research to inform the City and other key stakeholders when designing a plan to address violence against women and girls in public spaces. As part of the City's Strategic Plan, Mayor Lightfoot has convened a GBV Research Advisory Group to support the implementation efforts of the plan. A smaller working group of researchers has formed that will lead the scoping study. These researchers include:

- Sarah Welch, Director of Research Evaluation, Buehler Center for Health Policy and Economics, Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University
- Callie Kaplan, Director of Research, Social IMPACT Research Center at Heartland Alliance
- Abha Rai, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, School of Social Work; Associate Director, Center for Immigrant and Refugee Accompaniment, School of Social Work; Faculty Fellow, Center for Urban Research and Learning, Loyola University Chicago
- Gwendolyn Purifoye, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, North Park University
- Amanda Ward, Ph.D., Research Assistant Professor, Center for Criminal Justice Research, Policy and Practice, Center for Urban Research and Learning, Loyola University Chicago
- Maribeth Rezey, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology, Loyola University Chicago

"Public spaces — which includes mobile spaces like buses, trains, planes, transport hubs, and highway plazas — can be and are weaponized to victimize women and girls. The design of transport hubs pedestrian density, and rapid movement add a level of potential danger that is not mirrored elsewhere," said Professor Gwendolyn Purifoye of North Park University. "I am pleased that the City of Chicago is studying public spaces because doing so can provide us with a critical view for better assessing and addressing the conditions present during the offenses and lead to more impactful solutions.

The study will require significant analysis of readily available data such as CPD data, National Crime Victimization Survey data, and the Chicago Department of Public Health's Healthy Chicago Survey. The Mayor's Office and the City Clerk's Office will



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engage stakeholders and residents to better understand their experiences in public spaces as well.

“Chicago’s efforts in addressing an often-normalized form of violence in cities across the world, and as the second city in the United States to participate in this Global Initiative we hope will inspire many more cities to take their steps in ensuring safe and sustainable cities for women and girls — and for all,” said Kalliopi Mingeirou, Chief, Ending Violence against Women Section, UN Women.

Information gathered in the scoping study will inform recommendations for the City to increase safety in public spaces for female-identified residents. The study is anticipated to be released at the end of 2022.

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