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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 6, 2014

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OIG Audit Finds CDOT Ahead of the Curve in Data Use but Missing Some Targets in Service Delivery

The City of Chicago Office of Inspector General (OIG) has completed an audit of the Chicago Department of Transportation's (CDOT) 311 service request performance reporting from 2010 through 2012. The OIG found that CDOT failed to meet its service delivery goals for two out of five repair types. It also found that some of the data made available to the public, covered by Executive Order 2012-2, was inaccurate or incomplete.

Specifically, the audit found that CDOT,

- Regularly met its goals for repair of traffic lights, pavement cave-ins, and stop signs.
- Did not meet its self-determined targets for pothole and street light repair in any of the three years examined.

At least 26% of pothole repairs exceeded CDOT's target of 7 days from request to completion, and at least 24% of street light repairs exceeded the target of 4 days. In response, CDOT noted that it strives to meet all of its service goals and agrees with the OIG's recommendations to address staffing concerns with the Office of Budget and Management and to continue to assign employees to priority services.

The audit also found that the service delivery data the City presented to the public was inaccurate or incomplete in two locations:

- The Service Delivery Metrics website was inaccurate. 53% of actual service requests were not reported, making CDOT's 2012 performance metrics for pothole and street light repairs appear better than they truly were.
- The Data Portal presented accurate information for pothole and street light repairs, but did not provide any information on traffic lights, pavement cave-ins, and stop signs.

CDOT took immediate actions to fix these errors and, in its response, notes that it recently launched an independent performance tracking tool on its website.

“While our audit identified performance and reporting issues that warrant corrective action,” said Inspector General Joe Ferguson, “We were very glad to find CDOT engaged in pro-active and meaningful self-measurement, something we have found lacking in many other City departments. Nevertheless, inaccurate or incomplete reporting of performance data as found here may undermine the very public confidence and trust that transparency mechanisms intend to foster. We are therefore encouraged by CDOT’s responsiveness to assuring that the public gets complete and accurate information about its delivery of core services important to City residents and visitors alike.”

The full audit, and City’s response to the findings, can be found online at the OIG website: www.ChicagoInspectorGeneral.org

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