

Offered by Councilor Ed Flynn, Baker, Bok, Breadon, Coletta,
Fernandes Anderson, Flaherty, Lara, Louijeune, Murphy and Worrell



CITY OF BOSTON

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS SAFETY CONCERNS ASSOCIATED WITH DOUBLE-DECKER SIGHTSEEING BUSES AND REQUIREMENT OF DOUBLE DECKER BUS PUBLIC SAFETY MEASURES IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

- WHEREAS:** Double-Decker buses are known to present a unique set of safety challenges, including instability created by a higher center gravity and substantially larger ‘blind spots’ that limit the vision of bus operators to see other vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists, and a longer wheelbase that limits the ability to turn sharply while maneuvering around the historic streets of Boston; *and*
- WHEREAS:** The Boston Police Department changed “Rule 404, SIGHT-SEEING AUTOMOBILE RULES” of the City of Boston’s Rules and regulations in June 2019 and thereby increased the allowable vehicle height to no more than 14 feet tall; *and*
- WHEREAS:** Open-top double-decker buses expose passengers to overhead safety risks from street signs, wires, poles, bridge structures and falling objects; *and*
- WHEREAS:** The June 2019 modification to Rule 404 allowed for licensure of double-decker sightseeing buses that are 14 feet tall and approximately 40 feet long with an open-top design; *and*
- WHEREAS:** The City of Boston has not conducted any public hearings regarding the suitability of open-top double-decker sightseeing bus service on city streets, did not seek public input before changing Rule 404, did not review the history of double-decker bus safety in the City from the 1980s and 1990s, and at present, has not produced formal analysis of safety risks associated with open-top design double-decker, including an inventory of overhead safety danger zones along Boston’s existing sightseeing tour routes; ***NOW,
THEREFORE BE IT***
- ORDERED:** That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing on permitting of double-decker sightseeing buses in the City to allow for public comment, presentation of safety data, an assessment of safety hazards and risks and until such time that an assessment is complete, the City shall consider suspending the June 2019 alteration of Rule 404 and prohibit double-decker bus operations in the City of Boston. Representatives from BPD, BTS, sightseeing bus companies, advocates, and other relevant and interested parties shall be invited to attend.

