



Boston City Council

ED FLYNN

Councilor - District 2

February 25, 2025

Mayor Michelle Wu
1 City Hall Square, Suite 550
Boston, MA 02201

Michael Cox
Commissioner, Boston Police Department
1 Schroeder Plaza
Boston, MA 02120

RE: Increasing oversight on rideshares

Dear Mayor Wu and Commissioner Cox,

I'm writing today to highlight and share public safety concerns from my constituents regarding Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), or rideshares. Over the weekend, a woman was allegedly sexually assaulted by her rideshare driver when travelling from South Boston to her home. While the driver was swiftly identified and arrested on a reported rape charge the next day, this is not the first incident of sexual assault charges when it comes to rideshares. In 2018, a driver was charged with exposing himself to two women near Downtown Crossing. In 2015, another driver was convicted of aggravated rape, kidnapping, assault and battery.

Ensuring the safety of all residents - particularly our young women - who use rideshares is critical. While the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU) currently regulates TNCs, including rideshare drivers, services, and companies, I believe the Boston Police Department needs to play a larger role in regulating and providing oversight on public safety issues regarding rideshares in our City. The City of Boston should seriously consider creating a division, similar to the Hackney Carriage Unit of the Boston Police Department, to regulate rideshares.

We should also require rideshare drivers to register with the City and get fingerprinted. Currently, while Massachusetts requires a two-step background check for those who want to drive for a rideshare company, there is no requirement for rideshare drivers to undergo fingerprinting. In New York City, rideshare drivers are required by the City and the Taxi & Limousine Commission (TLC) to submit their fingerprints in addition to background checks.

Please note I previously filed a hearing order on TNCs and rideshares in 2019 due to concerns on public and pedestrian safety, as well as their impact on traffic with Boston being rated one of the highest rated cities for congestion issues. I will file additional legislation next week regarding these public safety and quality of life concerns.

According to data from Mass.gov, in 2019, transportation network companies (TNCs) provided 91.1 million rides in Massachusetts, of which 45.3 million rides originated in Boston (124,110 per day).



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While the industry was hit during the pandemic, rideshares are back on the rise. In 2021, 18.3 million rides originated from Boston (50,137 per day), with 13 million rides being local trips.

Given the sheer volume of rideshares that start and operate in Boston, there needs to be stronger municipal oversight on TNCs in the form of a personal registration - or license and fee - to drive on account of public safety issues, traffic, and the wear and tear of our roads.

Incidents of sexual assault on rideshares are deeply disturbing and unsettling for residents across the City of Boston. I urge the City to work closely with the DPU and state partners to register and fingerprint drivers, as well as transferring public safety and oversight functions to the Boston Police.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Flynn".

Ed Flynn

Boston City Councilor, District 2