



## CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

### ORDER FOR A HEARING ON REGULATION OF TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANIES (TNCs) BY THE CITY OF BOSTON AND BOSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

- WHEREAS:** Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), such as Uber and Lyft, provide ride-sharing services that are convenient and used by many to commute in Boston. They are now a ubiquitous sight on our streets; *and*
- WHEREAS:** Recognizing that TNCs have become an integral part of our overall transportation system, residents have also expressed that this evolving industry continues to present serious concerns related to public safety, pedestrian safety, traffic and congestion; *and*
- WHEREAS:** Recently, a woman was allegedly sexually assaulted by her rideshare driver when travelling from an establishment in South Boston to her home. 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; *and*
- WHEREAS:** Ensuring the safety of all residents in rideshares is critical. 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 or to register with the City of Boston. 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; *and*
- WHEREAS:** While the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities (DPU) currently regulates TNCs, there is precedent for the Boston Police Department (BPD) to play a larger role in regulating and providing oversight on public safety issues regarding rideshares in our City. The Boston Police Department includes the Hackney Carriage Unit, which oversees taxi cabs in the city. Discussion is warranted with state partners on exploring the merits of transferring public safety and oversight functions to the City of Boston; *and*
- WHEREAS:** 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). 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; *and*

**WHEREAS:** Given the sheer volume of rideshares that start and operate in Boston, residents continue to call attention to the need for stronger municipal oversight on TNCs, including in the form of a personal registration, license and fee for drivers to operate in Boston due to continued public safety concerns, traffic, and the wear and tear of our roads; *and*

**WHEREAS:** A 2018 report from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council estimated that 59% of all ridesharing trips are adding additional vehicles on our region's streets. It is worthwhile to discuss prohibiting out-of-state operators from ridesharing in the City of Boston due to their exacerbation of our existing traffic crisis, consistently rated among the worst in the country, and posing additional pedestrian safety challenges. The lack of designated TNC pick up and drop off areas, or adherence to them, often results in vehicles pulling over in the middle of the street, heightening the safety risks for all on our roads due to blocked travel lanes. TNC drivers are often unfamiliar with the neighborhoods of Boston and residents often report speeding on our streets; *and*

**WHEREAS:** The increased demand for TNC rides also creates consumer protection concerns about prices jumping significantly during sporting or city events, or when the MBTA breaks down; *and*

**WHEREAS:** With TNCs being a significant part of our transportation network, they belong in the discussion of our current traffic issues, as well as their impact on public safety, pedestrian safety, the environment and our overall quality of life. It is worthwhile to explore how other major US cities regulate these companies, and the ability for additional oversight at the municipal level via the Boston Police Department; *and*

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:**

That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss regulation of TNCs by the City of Boston and Boston Police Department to address public safety, pedestrian safety, traffic and quality of life issues relating to TNCs. Representatives from the Boston Transportation Department, Boston Police Department, State Department of Public Utilities, TNCs and other relevant and interested parties shall be invited to testify.

**Filed in Council:** February 27, 2025