OFFERED BY COUNCILOR ED FLYNN

CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS TRANSPORTATION NETWORK COMPANIES OPERATING IN BOSTON

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, and they are now a ubiquitous sight on our streets as recent reports indicate an average of over 115,000 trips per day in the city; *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 concerns related to traffic, public safety and Vision Zero, the environment, and consumer protection; *and*

WHEREAS: Recent data from the Department of Public Utilities show that there was a 25% increase in total rides from 2017 to 2018, with 81.3 million rides completed in Massachusetts in 2018; *and*

WHEREAS: More than 42 million rides began in Boston in 2018, which was a 21% increase from 2017, accounting for the most rides in any city in the Commonwealth, and a 2018 report from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council estimated that 59% of all ride sharing trips are adding additional vehicles on our region's streets; *and*

WHEREAS: The prevalence of TNC vehicles from all over the region is putting more cars on our roads, contributing to the difficulty of MBTA busses to move our workforce efficiently, and exacerbating our issues with traffic, which was recently reported to be worst in the nation; *and*

WHEREAS: Some cities are enacting regulations on TNCs, with New York City having one of the most restrictive laws that places a cap on the number of TNCs, such as Uber and Lyft, in the city for one year, and establish a minimum wage for drivers, while other municipalities have imposed fees on TNC rides, and cities like San Francisco have piloted geofencing at appropriate areas of the city to limit pickups, reduce congestion, and discourage double parking; *and*

WHEREAS: The lack of designated TNC pick up and drop off areas results in double parking or vehicles pulling over in the middle of the street, and in bus and bike lanes; which poses risks to the safety of all on our roads and Vision Zero due to blocked travel lanes and additional congestion; TNC drivers may also be unfamiliar with the neighborhoods of Boston and residents often report speeding on our streets; *and*

WHEREAS: There have been incidents in recent years that have led to public safety concerns with TNC companies, which are regulated by the Department of Public Utilities, while taxicabs are regulated by the Hackney Division in the Boston Police Department, *and*

WHEREAS: This additional traffic also creates public health, environmental, and sustainability concerns, as the additional cars affect air quality, increase carbon emissions, and run contrary to the goal of promoting environmentally sustainable transportation methods such as public transit, biking, and walking; *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: As TNCs become a significant part of our transportation network, they belong in the discussion of our current traffic issues, as well as their impact on the environment and our overall quality of life, and the City should discuss measures that can alleviate congestion and safety issues such as designated pickup and drop off spots and geofencing, as well as how we can leverage the demand for TNCs to improve our transportation infrastructure; *and*

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:

That the appropriate Committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss TNCs in the City of Boston and measures that the city can take to address traffic, safety, and quality of life issues relating to TNCs. Representatives from the Boston Transportation Department, TNCs, and other relevant and interested parties shall be invited to testify.

Filed in Council: July 10, 2019