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CONSENT CALENDAR
November 27, 2018

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington, Mayor Jesse Arreguin, and
Councilmember Sophie Hahn
Subject: Referral to the Transportation Commission: Explore Possibilities for Initiating Equitable
Exchange with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs)

RECOMMENDATION:

The City Council requests that the Transportation Commission initiate research into an effective means of equitable exchange with TNCs. In order to compensate the City of Berkeley for traffic congestion, air pollution, and infrastructure damage, the Council recommends that TNCs participate in the payment of taxes and the exchange of data.

BACKGROUND:

With their growing popularity, TNCs have provided important benefits to many members of the Berkeley community by offering efficient and convenient transportation at a low cost. These ridesharing apps have also significantly reduced the amount of DUIs across the country. While we acknowledge the benefits of these services, we must also acknowledge their issues.

In recent years, a growing number of jurisdictions have grappled with the issue of rising vehicle traffic caused by a high volume of trips made by TNCs. The presence of TNC vehicles has posed a major problem for bus drivers in particular. While dropping off and picking up passengers, TNC drivers often make illegal stops in designated bus lanes. These illegal stops prevent buses from accessing stops, thereby causing costly delays and putting bus passengers in danger by forcing them to board buses in the middle of busy roadways.

Furthermore, because they utilize gasoline-powered vehicles, TNCs increase overall levels of air pollution. The pollutants produced by these vehicles have harmful effects on Berkeley residents, with the potential to cause serious respiratory health problems.

Lastly, the high volume of trips also contributes to the gradual destruction of local transportation infrastructure. Maintaining our streets, sidewalks, and pedestrian crossings is costly, yet highly important to the public. In the interest of fairness, TNCs should compensate the City of Berkeley for impacts on this infrastructure.

As it stands, TNCs do not pay taxes to the City of Berkeley, resulting in a loss of useful revenue. Recently, cities like Chicago and San Francisco have held these companies accountable by successfully imposing taxes on them. However, the compensation provided by TNCs does not have to come only in the form of taxes. These companies also collect important data on the volume of pickups and dropoffs in specific locations. By requiring or negotiating with TNCs to share this anonymous data, the Public Works Department could better plan transportation investments. Additionally, this data would be highly useful for the placement and construction of designated TNC pickup/dropoff zones, which would benefit both the City of Berkeley and the TNCs themselves.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION: Potential increases in revenue.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: Consistent with Berkeley's Environmental Sustainability Goals.

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