October 19, 2021

To: General Government and Licensing Committee.
Re: Item GL26.11, Back-to-School - Vehicle-for-Hire Driver Training

Dear members of the committee,

Walk Toronto is a grassroots pedestrian advocacy group that works with various levels of government, community groups and citizens to improve walking conditions and safety in Toronto.

Walk Toronto supports the motion to ensure that new vehicle-for-hire and private transportation company licensees have completed a driver training accreditation program.

The past decade has seen an increase in the number of pedestrians killed by motor vehicles on Toronto's streets. To address this epidemic of road violence, a wide variety of measures are needed. The City of Toronto has publicly embraced the Vision Zero philosophy to reduce deaths and serious injuries caused by traffic. While the most important element of Vision Zero is changing the physical structure of our roads, education is also an important element of this approach.

The proposed driver training accreditation program is a helpful contribution to that education. Important areas for training could include accessibility and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) training, defensive driving, and knowledge of relevant Toronto bylaws and regulations. These types of training are not provided by the apps used by private transportation companies, leaving rideshare drivers without adequate knowledge to operate in a manner that is as safe as possible for themselves and all citizens of our city.

Vehicles for hire managed by private transportation companies like Uber have become a significant presence on Toronto's streets. Drivers of such vehicles often work long hours and are under considerable time pressure, which can lead to dangerous situations. Given their outsized presence on Toronto's streets, it is important that they receive additional, targeted training to contribute to the safety of Toronto's streets, among other goals.

Thank you,

Dylan Reid
On behalf of Walk Toronto