



Gainesville Police Department – Administrative Services

## **Vehicle For Hire & Transportation Network Companies**

Gainesville Police Department  
October 2014

# Vehicles For Hire Ordinance

- Chapter 28 of the Gainesville Ordinances legislates motorized and non-motorized vehicles
- Business operators are required to have a valid franchise from the city.

# Current language under 28-3

- (a) It shall be unlawful for any company as defined herein to operate or engage in the business of operating vehicles for hire within the city without having first obtained a franchise from the city manager or designee.
- (b) It shall be unlawful for any driver as herein defined to operate a VFH under the auspices of a company that doesn't have a valid franchise from the city.

# Chapter 28 Vehicles For Hire

## Requirements for a Franchise Application

- Log of all vehicles in the companies fleet (to include make, model and VIN).
- Proof of insurance.
- Proof of valid drivers license information for all drivers along with seven year drivers license history.
- Criminal history report for all drivers.
- Schedule of rates to be charged.
- Description of franchise color scheme and insignia to include a photograph of the scheme.
- To operate at the Gainesville Regional Airport, the franchise must have an airport decal.

# VFH Vehicle Requirements

- Vehicles are inspected each year by GPD in accordance with Sec. 28-14.5. - Equipment and safety requirements of VFH.
- A motor vehicle in service as a VFH shall have and maintain the following equipment in good working order:
  - Adequate heater and air conditioner;
  - Adequate brakes on all wheels;
  - Tires of good quality;
  - Speedometer;
  - Seat belts for the driver and all passengers.
- Each VFH shall be maintained in a clean, well painted manner so as to provide a generally good appearance

# VFH Driver Requirements

- Required to display City permit in the vehicle.
- Criminal history checks done by GPD to confirm that driver is able to be permitted.
- Approximately a dozen driver permit applications have been denied in 2014 due to issues regarding criminal history.

# VFH Violations

If the franchise owner allows a vehicle to be driven by a person not in possession of a city issued VFH permit the following penalties are applied:

- (1) First Violation- Written Warning
- (2) Second Violation- Three- Month Suspension of the franchise.
- (3) Third Violation-One-year suspension of the franchise.

# Miscellaneous Requirements

- Upon discovery of any personal property left by a passenger, a driver shall deposit such property with the police department within 24 hours
- A driver shall take either the most direct or the fastest route to a passenger's destination unless otherwise authorized or directed by the passenger.
- Every taxicab and limousine driver shall maintain a daily manifest upon which are recorded all trips made each day, showing time and place of origin and destination, of each trip and amount of fare, and all such completed manifests shall be returned to the owner by the driver at the conclusion of his/her tour of duty



# VFH by the Numbers

- Number of approved franchises: 22
- Number of permitted drivers: 207
- Number of registered vehicles: 116

Revenues to the City based on permitting:

2012 - \$9,173.74

2013 - \$12,764.00

2014 - \$15,779.25



## Transportation Network Company

A **transportation network company (TNC)** is a company that uses an online-enabled platform to connect passengers with drivers using their personal, non-commercial, vehicles. This can be considered a type of ridesharing. Examples include Lyft, Uber, Sidecar, Wingz, Summon and Haxi.

# Companies in Gainesville

- Only current company known to be active in Gainesville at this time is Uber.
- Lyft is active in Jacksonville and Orlando.
- Sidecar was tested and showed no drivers were online in Gainesville area when tried.

# Cities Dealing with TNCs

Some cities are not trying new methods of regulations with regard to TNCs.

## Enforcement Actions:

- Cities such as Miami, Orlando, and Chicago have all run undercover stings that result in the issuance of citations (fines) and the impounding of the drivers' vehicles. These stings were a result of the companies working inside the City, even after being told they were out of compliance with City Code.

# Cities Dealing with TNC's

## Changes to Regulatory Frameworks include:

- State of Virginia & City of Detroit entering into Temporary Operating Agreements until more permanent regulations are vetted and agreed upon.
- The City of Austin and Houston have made changes to their City Code to allow for the regulation of TNC's.
- State of Colorado passed SB 125 which resulted in the regulation of their TNC's to fall under their public utilities commission.

# Cities Dealing with TNC's

The common theme among the cities that have made regulatory changes is that they want to embrace the innovation that is emerging while still ensuring the safety of their citizens. Conditions for the companies include:

- Extensive background checks for drivers.
- Rigorous insurance requirements.
- Features to help customers identify the driver and their vehicle.
- Can only accept rides booked through the mobile app, no hails.
- Accommodating citizens with ADA requirements.