



# SAN FRANCISCO PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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## Executive Summary Planning Commission Car-Share Policy Statement And Informational Hearing on Zoning Administrator Bulletin

HEARING DATE: JUNE 10, 2010

*Project Name:* Car-Share Policy  
*Case Number:* 2009.0187TU  
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*Recommendation:* **Initiate Ordinance to Amend Planning Code Section 166, Approve Draft Resolution, and Establish New Commission Policy**

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### INTRODUCTION

Our basic choices for urban transportation modes haven't changed much since the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century: public transit, walking, biking, and the single-owner automobile. The newest option, car-share, isn't a technological innovation as much as it is a new way to use cars, a sort of library service for cars. San Francisco is a leader in the car-share movement. Car-sharing began in the United States just over 10 years ago<sup>1</sup>. City Car-Share began in 2001 and the Planning Commission instituted car-share requirements as part of project "Conditions of Approval" as early as June 2002<sup>2</sup>. Shortly thereafter, the Commission codified uniform requirements in the Planning Code, with the 2005 adoption of the Rincon Hill Plan. To date, the Department's research could not locate any other municipality that requires car-share parking by local ordinance<sup>3</sup>. As an early adopter of car-share, the City is still learning about how to best implement car-share and about how car-share relates to other policy goals. This case report and associated hearing seek to refine our implementation of car-share controls in San Francisco.

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<sup>1</sup> Balish, Chris. How to Live Well Without Owning a Car, Ten Speed Press, pg 161, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> On June 20, 2002 the Planning Commission adopted Motion No. 16443 for the project at 724 Van Ness Avenue/650 Turk noting, "The Project Sponsor has offered two parking spaces to City CarShare in order to provide for shared car use by Project residents as well as the general public."

<sup>3</sup> According to Rick Rybeck of Washington D.C's Department of Transportation, the D.C. Commission will at times exact car-share spaces in developments requiring discretionary approval but there are no standards that would automatically trigger a set number of car-share parking spaces.

## **PURPOSE**

This staff report provides a holistic overview of car-share and provides the Commission with the opportunity a) to initiate amendments to Section 166 of the Planning Code; b) articulate the Commission's policy stance on car-share and development through the proposed Planning Commission Policy Resolution, and c) to resolve current ambiguities in the Code through the attached draft Zoning Administrator Bulletin.

## **REQUIRED COMMISSION ACTIONS**

### **Initiate Amendments to Planning Code Car-share Controls:**

At the April 8, 2010 Planning Commission hearing, some Commissioners requested that the June 10, 2010 hearing be publically noticed to enable initiation of amendments to the Planning Code controls for car-share. In response, the Department has prepared a draft Ordinance that would amend Section 166. This draft Ordinance is before the Commission for consideration. If the Commission determines that the car-share controls in Section 166 should be amended, the Commission may "initiate" such changes today. Initiation does not involve a decision on the substance of the amendments; it merely begins the required 20 day notice period, after which the Commission may hold a hearing and take action on the proposed Code amendments.

### **Action on Proposed Resolution:**

The proposed resolution is before the Commission so that it may consider establishing new policy. The proposed resolution would create guidelines regarding the displacement of car-share spaces by new development, establish procedures for Commission deliberation of car-share requirements beyond those identified in Section 166, and state the Commission's desire to explore a citywide system for on-street car-share parking network. Specifically, the attached resolution would establish the following policies:

1. The Commission hereby recognizes that voluntary car-share parking spaces are a valuable component to the success of San Francisco's overall car-sharing program.
2. The Commission now establishes that residential and mixed-use development proposals that would result in the loss of existing car-share spaces shall be reviewed in the context of our general preference outlined in the attached chart.
3. The Commission recognizes the appropriateness of the existing requirements and affirms that the Commission will seek to increase these requirements only in extraordinary cases where transportation impacts of the specified project combined with the project location warrant additional moderation.
4. Where the Commission finds extraordinary circumstances as described in number three above, the Planning Commission may require additional car-share at the amounts reflected in the attached table.

5. The Commission acknowledges that the arbitrary allocation of required car-share parking beyond that stated here may result in an imbalance of development and undue financial burden to the sponsor.
6. The Commission believes that it behooves the City to establish a larger framework that works in coordination with the City's proposed residential growth and plans for transportation infrastructure investment.
7. The Commission finds that the benefit of providing on-street car-share spaces can significantly improve the quality of the City's car-share program in the following ways a) proliferation of spaces legitimacy of car-sharing, b) perceived safety of car-share, and c) efficiency of on-street parking spaces.
8. The Commission hereby requests further exploration of these issues through independent analysis by the City and that the findings be part of an update to the City's General Plan, especially the Transportation Element.
9. Finally, the Commission urges the Planning Department to engage the issue in coordination with other transportation agencies of the City and County and the region at large.

**Action on draft Zoning Administrator Bulletin:**

The draft Zoning Administrator Bulletin (attached) is before the Commission for the Commission and public to review and comment. The Bulletin establishes protocols for the Department's administration of car-sharing requirements, distinguishes between different types of car-share spaces, and provides guidelines for the physical configuration of car-share spaces. While the Zoning Administrator is empowered to release clarifying Bulletins without Commission review, the Commission has asked for the opportunity to see documents prior to finalization. Therefore, this draft ZA Bulletin is before the Commission for comment.

**BACKGROUND**

**Car-Share Basics: Explored in Draft Zoning Administrator Bulletin**

The draft Zoning Administrator Bulletin outlines the basics of existing car-share controls, establishes protocols for the Department's administration of car-share requirements, distinguishes between different types of car-share parking spaces and provides guidelines for the physical configuration of car-share spaces. To avoid duplication of information, we encourage the Commission and the public to read the draft Zoning Administrator Bulletin first to become familiar with existing controls and the Department's implementation of those existing controls.

**POLICY ISSUES**

Recent Commission actions requiring the replacement of market-rate, fee-based car-share spaces may have generated the unintended consequence of discouraging the voluntary provision of car-share parking. Property owners have described an increasing hesitance to voluntarily provide car-share parking on underutilized lots due to a perception that the Planning Commission or Department may require that such voluntary spaces be indefinitely retained by the property owner. The majority of car-

share parking spaces in San Francisco are currently provided voluntarily, outside of requirements of Planning Code Section 166 and Planning Commission Conditions of Approval. The proposed resolution recognizes that voluntary car-share parking spaces are a valuable component to the success of San Francisco's overall car-sharing program. This proposed declaration of Commission Policy seeks to reverse this unsettling trend by clarifying how the Commission will respond to future development proposals that remove car-share parking spaces. The proposed resolution also initiates amendments to car-share controls articulated in Planning Code Section 166.

### **Issue 1.1 Establishing the Appropriate Requirements: Exploring Potential Amendments to Section 166**

*Discussion:* At the April 8, 2010 Commission hearing, some members of the Commission requested review of the existing requirements. Specifically, members of the Commission questioned the utility of single-car pods and requested exploring increasing the minimum requirement from one space to two spaces. Staff subsequently consulted with representatives of two car-share organizations and a local transportation policy expert, and has concluded that the existing minimum requirement for one car-share space is appropriate for several reasons. Numerous single-car pods exist within San Francisco and within other markets, demonstrating that such pods can be effectively managed by a car-share organization. It should be noted that the car-share spaces required by the Planning Code serve to address demand created by the new development, augmenting the overall network of car-share pods, and are not intended to wholly fulfill the entire neighborhood demand for car-share services. Single-car pods that are required by the Code can be effective in expanding car-sharing into new areas, establishing a foothold of basic service that can catalyze new membership in previously underserved areas.

Members of the Commission also discussed the application of nonresidential car-share requirement to additional zoning districts. At present, nonresidential developments in certain Districts are not subject to these requirements, such as the large office projects proposed within the C-3 Zoning Districts. Staff has concluded that it is appropriate to apply non-residential carshare requirements to projects in all Districts. Such spaces could be particularly beneficial to employees within office buildings or large institutions where the pods are located, to run errands or attend off-site meetings throughout the day. These requirements would typically only capture larger development projects, because they are triggered for projects that propose at least 25 off-street parking spaces for non-residential uses.

*Recommendation:* Adopt the draft Resolution and initiate amendments to Section 166 to expand non-residential requirements to all districts and to explicitly allow car-share parking wherever residential parking is permitted.

### **Issue 1.2 Establishing the Appropriate Requirements: Exploring Best Practices**

*Discussion:* San Francisco's requirement for car-share spaces is among the most rigorous when compared with other major North American cities. This report examines three case studies: Vancouver, Chicago, and Philadelphia.

Vancouver currently requires 2% of all required parking spaces for new commercial developments and residential developments seeking rezoning, to be dedicated to car-share spaces. In addition to the required spaces, Vancouver also requires a development agreement between project sponsors and car-share service providers. Recent agreements have required developers to provide a vehicle with a minimum value of \$25,000 and an additional \$10,000 paid to the car-share organization as operational costs. In return for the provision of funds and space for car-sharing, car-share organizations are expected

to enter into five year agreements to provide car-share services in the new development. Vancouver also offers an incentive for developers that provide car-share by allowing a reduction in overall parking requirements at the rate of 1 car-share space (vehicle and operational cost provided) to 5 required parking spaces. In Chicago, car-sharing is encouraged through LEED certification in Chicago. All new commercial buildings in Chicago are required to be LEED certification at a minimum, and installing car-share spaces are often encouraged as a way to achieve LEED points. Philadelphia has car-share requirements for two specific planned areas. The Central Delaware Riverfront Overlay District allows for the substitution of one auto-share space for four required parking spaces, up to a maximum reduction of 40% of the required parking spaces. The Transit Oriented Development district requires 1 car share parking space for every 100 residential units or 100,000 square feet of commercial space for all new development.

When considering on-street car-share policies, San Francisco's existing policy is not as aggressive as Vancouver and Philadelphia, where both have implemented policies to allow car-share spaces to occupy on-street spaces. These cities have identified specific areas and/or spaces that are to be designated for car-share parking. The cost to occupy the on-street spaces by car-share organizations range from a flat nominal yearly fee of \$150 per location per year in Philadelphia to market rate fees based on underground parking costs within the area.

Recommendation: Adopt the draft Resolution and 1) acknowledge that benefit of providing on-street car-share spaces can significantly improve the quality of the City's car-share program in the following ways: proliferation of spaces, increased legitimacy of car-sharing, increased perceived safety of car-share, and maximized efficiency of on-street parking spaces; and 2) urge further exploration of these issues through independent analysis by the City and that the findings be part of an update to the City's General Plan, especially the Transportation Element.

## **Issue 2. Balancing car-share spaces with the benefits of new development**

Discussion: Car-sharing can be used as a tool to offset the urban impacts of a new development. To achieve a successful citywide car-sharing program, the Commission is tasked with exploring and mandating appropriate policy that balances space for car-share with other land use demands. Both the provision of car-share parking spaces and contextual infill development are encouraged within the City. While the City should encourage car-share spaces within development, the provision of these spaces should not compromise the delivery of much-needed housing, especially affordable housing. The provision and requirement for car-sharing spaces within a development should encourage the delivery of new housing consistent with General Plan policies. The Department recognizes that there are different types of car-share parking and there are different relative benefits of these types. Required car-share spaces are valuable to the City and the surrounding neighborhood because they are provided free of charge to certified car-share organizations, and have been proven to reduce the number of individually-owned vehicles, vehicle miles travelled, and vehicle emissions. These spaces have been demonstrated to reduce: (i) the number of individually-owned automobiles per household<sup>4</sup>; (ii) vehicle miles traveled per

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<sup>4</sup> R. Cervero, A. Golub, and B. Nee, SF City CartShare: Longer-Term Travel-Demand and Car Ownership Impacts, Prepared for Department of Transportation & Parking, City of San Francisco (Institute of Urban and Regional Development, UC Berkely, Working Paper 2006-07) p.14-33.

household<sup>5</sup>; and (iii) vehicle emissions generated per household. Existing spaces that are provided on a fee-basis to car-share services may be more easily replaced at a new location.

*Recommendation:* Residential and mixed-use development proposals that would result in the loss of existing car-share spaces shall be reviewed in the context of the policies proposed for adoption below.

**Issue 2.1 Replacement of Car-Share Spaces**

*Discussion:* Required car-share spaces<sup>6</sup>, provided free of charge to certified car-share organizations, provide the greatest public benefit. If the development that established these car-share spaces is not demolished but the required car-share spaces are proposed for removal, these spaces are required to be rededicated at a 1:1 ratio. That is, every existing space should be replaced in the new development or within a ¼ mile radius. If the development that generated the required spaces is also proposed for demolition, the new replacement project will be reviewed for its merits and shall be subject to the car-share requirements of the Planning Code that are applicable at that time but should not be required to maintain car-share spaces that were mandated in association to a previous project.

In order to encourage the ongoing supply of car-share spaces, replacement of fee spaces is not required.

*Recommendation:* Below is a summary chart proposing policy to govern replacement of existing car-share spaces.

<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Proposed Replacement Policy</b>
<b>Removal of Existing Required Car-Share Parking Where the Associated Project is Not Demolished.</b>	<b>1:1 Replacement Required</b>
<b>Loss of Existing Required Car-Share Parking Where the Initial Project is proposed for Demolition and Replacement.</b>	<b>No Replacement Required</b> Benefits and impacts of new project should be evaluated as a whole. Project is subject to the car-share requirements of the Planning Code.
<b>Loss of Existing Fee-Based Car-Share Parking without new proposed project.</b>	<b>No Replacement Required</b>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Required car-share spaces may be either spaces required by Section 166 or spaces that have been imposed by the Planning Commission as a Condition of Approval for a specific development.

**Issue 2.2 Imposition of Car-Share Requirements Exceeding Planning Code Section 166**

Discussion: To date, the Department does not have the ability to track which spaces required by the Planning Commission are occupied by a registered car-share provider. The Department has reached out to the two City-registered car-share organizations for this information but has not been successful in this research. Without a comprehensive analytical tool, we can anecdotally report that the spaces that have been required to date may not all be needed for use by car-share organizations. Without evidence that the existing requirements are inadequate, the Department proposes that the Commission recognize the appropriateness of the existing requirements (with the notable exception of the proposed amendment to the non-residential car-share requirements) and state that the Commission would seek to increase these requirements only in extraordinary cases where transportation impacts of the specified project combined with the project location warrant additional mitigations.

Recommendation: The Department proposes finding that the City's existing car-share requirements are generally appropriate at this time. There may be times when the Planning Commission will determine that a proposed project has extraordinary circumstances, such as exceeding the targeted levels of parking as identified in the Planning Code, and that the provision of this additional parking may result in increased traffic within the neighborhood. In such instances, the Commission declares its intention to require one or more car-share spaces beyond those required by Planning Code Section 166, upon finding that 1) the proposed project exceeds the amount of parking permitted by the Planning Code; or 2) the project or additional parking encourages additional private-automobile use, creating localized transportation impact for the neighborhood; and 3) this transportation burden may be lessened for the neighborhood by the provision of additional car-share spaces. Car-share spaces required beyond the scope of Section 166 shall only be required when extraordinary circumstances are found.

It is acknowledged that the arbitrary allocation of required car-share parking beyond that stated here may result in an imbalance of development and undue financial burden to the sponsor.

Upon making such findings, the Planning Commission may require additional car-share at the amounts reflected in this table:

<i>Residential Units</i>		
<b>Number of Residential Units</b>	<b>Number of Required Car-share spaces</b>	<b>Guidelines for Commission-Imposed Additional Car-share Spaces When Certain Findings are Made</b>
0-49	None	1
50-200	1	2
201 or more	2, plus 1 for every 200 units over 200	3, plus 2 for every 200 units over 200
<i>Non-Residential Uses</i>		
<b>Number of Parking Spaces (Non-Residential Uses or in a Non-Accessory Parking Facility)</b>	<b>Number of Required Car-share spaces</b>	<b>Guidelines for Commission-Imposed Additional Car-share Spaces When Certain Findings are Made</b>
0-24	None	1
25-49	1	2
50 or more	1, plus 1 for every 50 spaces over 50	2, plus 1 for every 40 spaces over 50

**Issue 3 Encourage Citywide Network for On-Street, Car-Share Parking**

*Discussion:* The State Vehicle code was amended in 2006<sup>7</sup> to give local jurisdictions the ability to designate certain streets or portions of streets for car-share vehicle parking or rideshare<sup>8</sup> parking. Since this amendment to the Vehicle Code, San Francisco has yet to implement a widespread system of on-street space for car-share. In order for car-sharing to be most effective as an alternative transportation choice, it should be integrated with larger land use pattern and transportation system instead of established on an ad-hoc basis through project approvals. Pod locations should be coordinated with population density and transportation infrastructure. Currently the pod growth is largely directed by car-share providers who operate within their own institutional goals and not necessarily with City or

<sup>7</sup> AB 2154, Goldberg. Parking: car share vehicle. Approved by Governor August 28, 2006. Filed with Secretary of State August 28, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Ridesharing is a form of transportation, other than public transport, in which more than one person shares the use of a vehicle, such as a van or car, to make a trip.

regional goals in mind<sup>9</sup>. While this may be an effective growth strategy within the business model of a car-share organization, it behooves the City to establish a larger framework that works in coordination with the City's proposed residential growth and plans for transportation infrastructure investment.

Early, in the City's car-share history, pods were located in public garages. Since 2005, no new pods have been established in City-owned garages. As some car-share organizations are private, for-profit organizations, dedication of public space for private profit has raised important questions about the use of public goods. Similar issues are sure to arise in conjunction with proposals for the dedication of on-street parking for car-share service providers. The City could offer to temporarily lease these on-street spaces for a reasonable fee, generating revenue that could benefit other transportation improvements and compensate the City for the use of the public realm. The Planning Department has discussed these issues with SFMTA, the agency which regulates on-street parking and city-owned public garages. Despite the challenges of providing on-street car-share spaces, these spaces can significantly improve the quality of the City's car-share program in the following ways:

- 1) Proliferation of spaces: The on-street placement of car-share spaces would foster the adequate distribution and availability of car-share vehicles throughout the City, particularly in dense areas that lack sufficient off-street parking for pods.
- 2) Legitimacy of car-sharing: the placement of car-sharing vehicles in key on-street locations provides for added recognition and legitimacy of car-sharing as a City recognized and encouraged program.
- 3) Perceived safety of car-share: the location of on-street car-share has proven to increase the perceived safety of utilizing the program, where in a survey "87% of car-share users felt safer accessing on-street cars," simply by being located in an open public area rather than parking garages.
- 4) Efficiency of on-street parking spaces: Most privately owned vehicles remain parked for a large portion of the day, whereas the goal of a car-share vehicle is to allow utilization of the same car by various members with varying usage period needs within any given day. This represents a more efficient use of collective resources because the on-street car-share spaces can act similarly to taxi stands or curbside bus stops and provide a service benefit to many more people than a regular on-street parking space.

Recommendation: The Department recommends that the Commission request further exploration of these issues through independent analysis by the City and that the findings be part of an update to the City's General Plan, especially the Transportation Element.

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<sup>9</sup> While some private and non-profit car-sharing organizations have adopted a code of ethics (established August 2008) that seeks to identify those services that are "based on public interest, whether privately operated or not, from other commercial enterprises", all local operators determine the size and location of their fleets without City guidance, other than zoning regulations.

## RECOMMENDATION

The Department recommends that the Commission *approve* the policies outlined in this report and adopt proposed Resolution to that effect.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS: ENFORCEMENT

Earlier projects that have requirements for car-share parking that pre-date the establishment of the requirement in Section 166 have proved difficult to track. It now appears that monitoring of these earlier car-share requirements may not have been sufficient. The Department has identified and began working to improve several areas in an effort to improve car-share monitoring.

An inventory list of required car-share spaces has been uploaded to the car-share web page. The Department has committed to maintain and update this list on a regular basis. This inventory would allow car-share organizations to keep track of all available required car-share spaces. The Department has established new procedures at the intake of new entitlement cases. Effective immediately, required car-share spaces are be inputted into our database and updated as necessary at the end of the entitlement process. This database will automatically generate a list of the required car-share spaces regularly and staff will update the car-share webpage list accordingly.

In addition to requiring car-share spaces to be noted and labeled throughout all plans including revisions and addendums, the Department is establishing new standard conditions to be applied to projects with car-share requirements. These conditions will be recorded as Notices of Special Restrictions on properties with car-share requirements.

The Department is also working with the Department of Building Inspection to develop new protocols to add the Planning Department to the job card at building inspection. This will ensure that the project planner will be conducting an inspection on site prior to the issuance of temporary or permanent certificate of occupancy.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

As of the date of this report, the Planning Department has received no letters regarding this proposal.

<b>RECOMMENDATION:</b>	<b>Recommendation of Approval</b>
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### Attachments:

- Exhibit A: Draft Planning Commission Resolution: Adopting Commission Policy and Initiating Amendments to the Planning Code
- Exhibit B: Draft Ordinance Amending Planning Code Section 166
- Exhibit C: Draft Zoning Administrator Bulletin