

CASTRO COURIER

City CarShare To Rev Up Locations

By Keith Burbank

Although City CarShare's efforts to seek the support of car sharing from the Castro Merchants stalled, the company still has its engines running.

"We want to be their [residents'] fourth choice" of transportation after walking, biking and taking public transit, said Brent O'Brien, director of member experience at City CarShare.

City CarShare has plans to introduce 14 cars to the neighborhood, spread among eight locations. Pretty much all of them have been approved by the SFMTA, O'Brien said.

O'Brien said there was some contention among members of the business group because the merchants' fear losing coveted parking spaces for their customers. But O'Brien claims car sharing helps alleviate the need for parking spaces.

"On average we serve 20 people per car," he said, referring to the number of vehicles taken off the road by one car share vehicle. A report by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) says car sharing has been shown to serve 13 people, on average.

"Car sharing has been shown to reduce household vehicle ownership rates, parking demand, vehicle miles traveled, and greenhouse gas emissions," according to the SFMTA's car sharing policy and pilot project. "Lower car ownership rates reduce overall parking demand, especially in residential and mixed use areas," SFMTA's report says.

In addition, people who opt to participate in car sharing rather than owning a car may save \$600 to \$800 each month, O'Brien said, suggesting residents could shop in the Castro with the savings.

"Ample and easily available car sharing is crucial to our city's transportation future," District 8 Supervisor Scott Wiener wrote in his July/August newsletter. District 8 includes the Castro neighborhood. "San Francisco has grown by 85,000 people since 2003 and is projected to grow by another 150,000 people by 2040. We need to give people great options other than owning a car. If we don't, we will have many more cars in San Francisco, worsening our already bad traffic and parking situations."

O'Brien provided a list of the locations in the Castro where his company is planning to place cars. None of the spaces are on Castro Street. We're "just trying to make the City a better place to live," O'Brien



said. City CarShare has been in business for 13 years, and is the pioneer of car sharing in the Bay Area, he said.

Although members of the Castro Merchants were upset at the thought of losing parking spaces to a car sharing company, O'Brien said the response of the group's leadership was "pretty positive" overall.

"Some have expressed concern about using on-street parking for car sharing," says Wiener in the his newsletter. "However, studies have shown that for every available car share, a half dozen private vehicles or more will go away as some people decide that they now can rely on car share. Whether one uses car share or not, it's in all of our interest to make sure we have great car sharing access."

The City's pilot project will end is August 2015.

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