



CASTRO COURIER

City CarShare To Rev Up Locations Contention over parking spaces persists

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 cus-

tomers. 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, especial-

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Commuter shuttles

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hood groups. Merchants are upset about 18th and Castro streets location because they were promised "no net loss of parking" when they gave their support for the Castro Street sidewalk widening project.

One bus stop may take up as many as four parking spaces.

The agreement between the City and bus companies that shuttle commuters to technology firms in other parts of the Bay Area and to businesses within the City is an 18-month pilot program that began officially during the summer. Previously, the City did not regulate the shuttles — which drew protests from residents.

The SFMTA has designated 105 stops for commuter shuttles, 93 of which are also used by City buses. Twelve stops are designated for commuter shuttles only. The cost of the pilot program is \$1.5 million, with all the money coming from

shuttle providers.

The pilot program will "test an approach to managing and regulating commuter shuttle loading activities, and ... measure the effectiveness of this approach," according to SFMTA. Findings from the pilot program will form the basis for the City's longer-term approach to regulating shuttles.

Some businesses in the Castro have been struggling financially because the sidewalk widening project has prompted shoppers to buy elsewhere until the project was completed. Limiting parking could aggravate the situation.

In addition, Castro Merchants President Daniel Bergerac says shoppers need cars for some items such as cases of wine. "Our customers need parking," he said.

The Castro neighborhood was initially left out of the network of commuter shuttle stops created by the SFMTA, which caused concern among riders of the shuttles, according to District 8 Supervisor Scott Wiener's July/August newsletter.