

TRANSPORTATION

MOTION

As gas prices rise, car sharing has become a standard transportation mode in many cities with drivers needing an extra car for errands, day trips or when a primary car breaks down. However, another less expensive alternative can be found in bikes and bike sharing.

Most car-sharing programs and companies facilitate an affordable service whereby customers reserve a car in advance, for a certain amount of time. The car-share companies own and insure their cars, which are parked at convenient locations around town. The customer need only pick up a car offered by any program and when finished, drop it off at the nearest car-share location. Gas, oil and car maintenance are paid by the company; members are issued a company credit card for these costs. If the car is already booked, members either have to take an alternate car, or wait until the car they prefer is available.

Like car sharing programs, bike sharing initiatives have been launched around the world providing urbanites and tourists with low-cost access to bicycles within inner cities. Such programs help to ease traffic congestion, curb pollution and boost physical activity. Unlike renting, many bike sharing programs operate on a self-serve model, without attendants and are geared toward short-term usage.

The Vélib in Paris, a new venture owned and operated by the city, is the world's largest bike-sharing program. The venture has placed 10,000 bicycles at 750 stations throughout the city. For a small credit card fee, Parisians can swipe the card at any bike rack, grab an available two-wheeler, ride it across town and leave it for others at their new destination. Bike rental is free for the first 30 minutes, which accounts for 80 percent of all rides with only a marginal cost for each additional half-hour. According to a report in Business Week, more than 6 million rides were recorded in the first three months with every bike rented an average of 10 times a day.

In March 2008, municipal officials in Washington DC announced a plan to pursue a public-private partnership with Clear Channel Outdoor to establish a bike sharing program that is touted as the first of its kind in the nation. SmartBike DC, intends to launch a 120 bike fleet throughout the District that can be rented for as long as three hours at a time.

In an effort to facilitate cost-effective, sustainable and environmentally friendly mode of transportation, LADOT should examine ways that a bike sharing program can be implemented in the City of Los Angeles (similar to the Vélib in Paris and the SmartBike in Washington DC).

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Department of Transportation to examine the feasibility of creating a bike sharing program in the City of Los Angeles and submit recommendations to the Transportation Committee within 45 days.

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