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### **How Can On-Site Carsharing Have the Best Environment for Success?**

*Part One of Mineta Transportation Institute's research offers several recommendations.*

San Jose, Calif., June 28, 2012 – The Mineta Transportation Institute ([transweb.sjsu.edu](http://transweb.sjsu.edu)) has released its newest peer-reviewed research report, *Residential On-Site Carsharing and Off-Street Parking Policy in the San Francisco Bay Area*. This research investigates the current practice of on-site carsharing and the associated parking standard changes from the perspective of three key groups – building developers, carsharing service providers, and local policymakers. This report is the first half of a two-part series on parking policy. The principal investigator was Charles Rivasplata, PhD, in close coordination with Zhan Guo, PhD, Richard Lee, PhD, David Keyon, and Luis Schloeter. The free 64-page report is available for PDF download from [transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1001-1.html](http://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1001-1.html)

Dr. Rivasplata said, “Based on interviews with 15 carsharing stakeholders, we identified major factors contributing to the relative success or failure of on-site carsharing programs. In general, the service has been well accepted by developers, planners, and service providers as a way of reducing parking demand and expanding local carsharing markets. However, despite the success of carsharing there is a clear gap between on-site carsharing programs and off-street parking standards, and between on-site carsharing programs and carsharing business operations.”

He explained that an effective program should coordinate the interests of developers, planners, residents, and service providers, providing sufficient incentive for residents to use these services without increasing parking supply.

On-site carsharing may reduce the demand for private car ownership and usage, and hence, the parking required to serve residents. This is a recent development, but it has increasingly been embraced by key stakeholder groups, including developers, service providers, residents, and policymakers. On-site carsharing may play a growing role in the future, given recent growth in carsharing, along with parking supply reductions in many cities.

The service is becoming more common, especially with the advent of companies such as Zipcar and City Car Share, which offer on-demand vehicles for a fee. The service has grown significantly in Europe and North America over the past decade. According to one study, as of 2009, there were approximately 377,600 carsharing members in about 57 metropolitan areas throughout North America.

Having vehicles on-site at apartment developments, workplaces, and other locations makes carsharing more convenient to use. It is ideal for people who can use transit for most trips, but that depend on a car for specialized trips (e.g., long-distance journeys, shopping trips).

The report recommends models for setting policy on carsharing. For example, one model could cater to a large, high-density city, such as San Francisco. Another could be designed to aid moderately dense suburban communities, such as those with 7-10 residential units per acre, perhaps by deploying traditional as well as emergent carsharing alternatives, such as peer-to-peer carsharing.

“Trip reduction in these areas might be achieved by promoting alternative transportation modes along strategic transit corridors,” said Dr. Rivasplata. “Experience has shown that for traditional carsharing services to be successful, targeted residential areas must have moderate to high density, good transit access, and residents open to using alternative modes regularly.”

Carsharing has been found to generate some positive environmental impacts. For example, one study reported that, based on Zipcar membership rates for Toronto, each carsharing vehicle removed approximately eight to ten private vehicles from the road. The complete report can be downloaded at no charge from [transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1001-1.html](http://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1001-1.html)

## **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

**Charles Rivasplata, PhD**, is a lecturer in the Urban and Regional Planning Department at San José State University, where he has taught local and regional transport planning classes since 2007. He is a senior transport planner at the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, largely focusing on transportation policy analysis. He earned master’s degrees in civil engineering and in city and regional planning from the University of California, Berkeley, and a PhD in transportation policy from UC Davis.

**Zhan Guo, PhD**, is an assistant professor of urban planning and transportation policy at the Wagner School of Public Service, New York University. He studies transportation and land use, public transit, and pedestrian behavior. He is interested in understanding the multiple travel options faced by individual travelers and how government policies could affect the availability of these options and the subsequent individual decisions.

**Richard Lee, PhD, AICP**, is a lecturer in the Urban and Regional Planning Department at San José State University and has been a research associate with the Mineta Transportation Institute for over 15 years. Dr. Lee is also an associate with Fehr & Peers, and he has over 25 years of experience as a transportation consultant and academic. He earned his master’s degrees in civil engineering and in city and regional planning, and his PhD in city and regional planning, all from the University of California, Berkeley.

**David Keyon** is a master of urban and regional planning student at San José State University, concentrating in land use and transportation. He worked over seven years as a development review planner in California prior to returning to school in 2010. David has an interest in public transportation planning.

**Luis Schloeter** is a second-year urban planning student at the Wagner Graduate School of Public Service at New York University, where he specializes in international development planning. He holds a bachelor’s degree in political science from Universidad Rafael Urdaneta, Venezuela, where he graduated with honors.

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The [Mineta Transportation Institute](http://www.mineta.org) (MTI) conducts research, education, and information and technology transfer, focusing on multimodal surface transportation policy and management issues, especially as they relate to transit. MTI was established by Congress in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and was reauthorized under TEA-21 and again under SAFETEA-LU. The Institute has been funded by Congress through the US Department of Transportation’s (DOT) Research and Innovative Technology Administration, by the California Legislature through the Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and by other

public and private grants and donations, including grants from the US Department of Homeland Security. DOT selected MTI as a National Center of Excellence following competitions in 2002 and 2006. The internationally respected members of the MTI Board of Trustees represent all major surface transportation modes. MTI's focus on policy and management resulted from the Board's assessment of the transportation industry's unmet needs. That led directly to choosing the San José State University College of Business as the Institute's home. Visit [transweb.sjsu.edu](http://transweb.sjsu.edu) or Twitter @minetatrans

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