



# Residential On-Site Carsharing and Off-Street Parking Policy in the San Francisco Bay Area

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*On-site carsharing has been widely embraced in some large cities... In order to be successful, carsharing programs must integrate various stakeholder concerns.*

With the growing use of motor vehicles, transportation planners have increasingly supported alternatives to indiscriminate

car use. Off-street parking policies and carsharing have emerged as credible alternatives for discouraging car ownership. This report explores an initiative that could connect these policy fields and build on their synergy – the provision of on-site carsharing service in residential developments. If carefully designed, it may help reduce off-street parking and expand carsharing.

## Study Methods

This report evaluates the performance of on-site carsharing programs in the San Francisco Bay Area by interviewing three principal classes of stakeholder: developers, planners, and carsharing service providers. It explores the way in which carsharing programs are structured to reduce residential parking, especially in moderate to high-density areas.

Interviews were conducted in four Bay Area cities of varying size, density, and access to alternative modes. Each city has provided its residents with mobility choices designed to replace the need for car ownership. They have employed different approaches, but they share many of the same issues facing other U.S. cities of comparable size and density.

Based on the interviews, the researchers identified the principal factors contributing to the relative success or failure of on-site carsharing programs:

- the unbundling status of off-street parking in residential developments;
- ties to off-street parking standards;
- financial constraints; and
- the level of coordination among stakeholders.

## Findings

**On-site carsharing has been widely embraced in some large cities.**

The interviews revealed that developers, planners, and service providers have accepted on-site carsharing, particularly in densely-populated, transit-rich communities. They also suggest that this has yielded positive effects in terms of both parking demand reduction and carsharing market expansion.

**There is still an institutional disconnect between carsharing and off-street parking.** Despite the success of carsharing, there is a clear gap between on-site carsharing programs

and off-street parking standards, and between carsharing programs and carsharing business operations. Often, on-site carsharing's reduced parking demand does not lead to reduced parking provision. A service provider may not be aware of on-site carsharing developments and may miss business opportunities.

**To be successful, carsharing programs must integrate stakeholder concerns.**

An effective on-site carsharing program should coordinate the interests of carsharing stakeholders, including developers, urban planners, residents and service providers. In addition, it must provide incentives for residents to use on-site carsharing without increasing parking supply.

**Policy Recommendations**

The authors recommend testing a few models for setting carsharing policy.

- One model might be designed to serve high-density cities, such as San Francisco.
- Another could be designed to serve moderately-dense suburban communities by deploying traditional and new carsharing options (e.g., peer-to-peer, one-way).
- In moderately-dense communities, trip reduction could be achieved by promoting alternative modes along major corridors, such as El Camino Real (south of San Francisco).
- For traditional carsharing services, it may be important to target high-density areas, but also those that:
  - are near transit facilities
  - have access to regular transit service, and
  - include residents who are open to using alternative modes regularly.



**About the Authors**

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For more details about the study, download the full report at [transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1001-1.html](https://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1001-1.html)