



SFMTA
Municipal Transportation Agency

Vehicle Sharing Parking Permit Policy

San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency
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Introduction

The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) 2013-2018 Strategic Plan states as a goal: “Make transit, walking, bicycling, taxi, ride sharing, and car sharing the preferred means of travel.” To this end, the SFMTA has adopted policies to encourage and facilitate vehicle sharing (commonly referred to as “car sharing,” high-frequency short-term self-service rental of cars, trucks, and vans) because it delivers significant social, environmental, and transportation benefits to the City, the SFMTA, and the people it serves, all at very little cost to the SFMTA.

Benefits of shared vehicles

- **Reduce automobile ownership rates and parking demand in residential areas.** By having access to a vehicle, households often give up a second or third vehicle. Some forego vehicle ownership entirely. A comprehensive study showed that every shared vehicle replaces as many as 13 private vehicles.¹ Lower vehicle ownership rates reduce overall parking demand, especially in residential and mixed use areas.
- **Reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).** Overall, members of vehicle sharing organizations (VSOs) drive fewer miles, which helps to reduce local congestion and parking demand.² One estimate concluded that each shared vehicle leads to about 18,000 fewer VMT every year.³
- **Improve Muni performance.** Muni performance is supported by reduced congestion and therefore on-time performance.
- **Increase the equity of curb access.** On-street spaces that are repurposed for vehicle sharing increases the equity of curb use – using parking in the public right of way to store shared vehicles rather than private vehicles means more people can benefit, not just those who own and park private vehicles.
- **Reduce greenhouse gas and other emissions.** Reducing VMT translates to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. On average, by reducing VMT and using fuel efficient vehicles with low emissions profiles, it is estimated that each shared vehicle reduces carbon dioxide emissions by about seven tons every year.⁴ Shared vehicles tend to be used more frequently, reducing the number of cold starts, contributing to lower overall emissions when compared to private automobiles.
- **Reduce household transportation budgets and increase economic reinvestment.** Bay Area residents spend up to \$12,000 annually per household vehicle. Households that forego owning

¹ Martin, Elliot, Susan Shaheen, and Jeffrey Lidicker. 2010. Impact of Carsharing on Household Vehicle Holdings: Results from North American Shared-Use Vehicle Survey. *Transportation Research Record: No. 2143*: 150–158.

² Martin, Elliot, and Susan Shaheen. 2011. The Impact of Carsharing on Public Transit and Non-Motorized Travel: An Exploration of North American Carsharing Survey Data. *Energies* 2011, 4: 2094-2114.
Cervero, Robert and Yushin Tasi. 2004. City CarShare in San Francisco, California: Second-Year Travel Demand and Car Ownership Impacts. *Transportation Research Record No. 1887*: 117-127. Cervero, Robert, Aaron Golub, and Brendan Nee. 2006. San Francisco City CarShare: Longer-Term Travel-Demand and Car Ownership Impacts. Working Paper.

³ Osgood, Andrea. 2007. Curb Dreams: Allocating On-Street Parking for Carsharing. Unpublished master’s thesis. University of California, Los Angeles.

⁴ Martin, Elliot, and Susan A. Shaheen. 2011. Greenhouse Gas Emission Impacts of Carsharing in North America, *IEEE Transactions on Intelligent Transportation Systems*, Vol. 12, No. 4: 1074-1086.

and operating a car and instead use vehicle sharing and a combination of walking, bicycling, taxi, and transit to meet their transportation needs spend as little as one-third of what they would by owning and operating a private vehicle. Some of these savings are reinvested in the local economy.

- **Make it easier to move about without using a private vehicle.** Access to a shared vehicle increases mobility of San Franciscans who already walk, bike, and use public transit more than most people in the nation. However, those who are members of VSOs do so more than non-members (77 percent of trips compared to 67 percent, respectively).⁵ This suggests that members of VSOs tend to walk, bike, or take transit for more trips than non-members.

Goals of SFMTA vehicle sharing policy

The SFMTA seeks to facilitate and encourage vehicle sharing with these primary strategies:

- Make it easy for vehicle sharing organizations to place vehicles in San Francisco, addressing a key obstacle to their success and increasing the convenience and attractiveness of vehicle sharing.⁶
- Minimize requirements and limitations on VSO operations so they can move nimbly to maximize the social benefits they deliver.
- Make the program as simple and efficient to administer as possible.
- Make vehicle sharing widely available to as many people as possible.

Eligibility to participate in SFMTA's vehicle sharing program

SFMTA has two vehicle sharing programs, one for off-street spaces and another for using on-street spaces.

To participate in the on-street program, a vehicle sharing organization must first meet the SFMTA's requirements as specified in Division II of the Transportation Code (SFTC Section 901) that include:

- An entity that provides preapproved members access to at least ten vehicles in San Francisco.
- Vehicles must be shared 100% of time (i.e., no exclusive or private use of the vehicles).
- Vehicles are available to members at an unstaffed self-service location and available for pick-up by members on a twenty-four hour, seven day per week basis without assistance or key exchanges or hand-offs with owner, operator, lot, stations or garage or any other paid or contracted personnel.
- Vehicles parked in permitted spaces must prominently display the VSO's emblem on both sides.

⁵ Cervero, Robert, Aaron Golub, and Brendan Nee. 2006. San Francisco City CarShare: Longer-Term Travel-Demand and Car Ownership Impacts. Working Paper.

⁶ Transit Cooperative Research Program. 2005. Report No. 108: Car Sharing: Where and How it Succeeds. Interviews with local vehicle sharing organizations.

SFMTA Approval of On-Street Share Vehicle Parking Spaces

SFMTA's role:

- The SFMTA will accept requests for on-street parking space permits on a rolling basis from certified VSOs that meet the requirements of the on-street program.
 - SFMTA will provide VSOs with a letter describing the on-street shared vehicle permit program, and providing SFMTA contact information, for distribution during outreach.
 - SFMTA staff will support each space based on technical merit and the stated goal of advancing vehicle sharing citywide.
 - If a VSO abandons a parking space, the SFMTA will then offer that space to other VSOs (on a first come, first serve basis). If another VSO does not want to place a shared vehicle in that parking space, the SFMTA will consider what other use of the curb would provide the most benefit (e.g., taxi stand, commercial loading zone, bicycle parking, intersection daylighting, etc.).
 - SFMTA will grant a maximum of 1,000 (one thousand) on-street shared vehicle parking permits.
 - SFMTA will not consider applications for shared vehicle parking space permits on block faces where it anticipates a high likelihood of street closures and/or temporary space closures for construction. The intent is to reduce the administrative burden that results for both SFMTA staff and VSOs and protect the reliability of vehicles sharing service to users.
 - SFMTA will not consider applications for shared vehicle parking permits at metered parking spaces in most cases, given the need for business-serving metered parking on neighborhood commercial corridors.
 - SFMTA staff will evaluate the technical, regulatory, and operational feasibility of each space request.
 - The SFMTA reserves the right to reject an application for a proposed parking space at any time.
 - Once a permit application for a shared vehicle on-street parking space has received preliminary SFMTA staff approval, the permit application undergoes the following approval steps (which is similar to the process for establishing other uses of the curb such as motorcycle spaces and color curb changes):
 - Review by SFMTA transportation engineering staff to avoid conflict with other projects and initiatives or other regulations (e.g., locating a space in a tow away zone).
 - Review by the Transportation Advisory Staff Committee (TASC) to notify relevant SFMTA divisions and other City departments (e.g., Planning Department, DPW, SFPD).
 - An SFMTA Transportation Engineering Public Hearing.
 - Approval of the designated parking space by the SFMTA Board of Directors
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Permit Conditions for On-Street Share Vehicle Parking Spaces

- VSOs are responsible for sponsoring individual parking spaces through the public outreach and implementation process, including:
 - Conducting all outreach for the spaces, including communicating with Supervisors' offices, residents, merchants, and community groups, as well as attending community group meetings to inform residents/merchants of proposed spaces.
 - Contacting the owner and occupants of any building fronting the proposed shared vehicle parking space, and the owner and occupants of any building on either side of the fronting property, sharing SFMTA permit program and contact information prepared and provided by the SFMTA.
 - Conducting all required public noticing of the proposed on-street space requests.
 - Attending SFMTA public hearings as the sponsor for their request, representing those spaces at public hearings, and addressing questions/concerns.
- VSOs must agree to keep the shared on-street parking space and surrounding area (defined as 25 feet on both sides) clean and free of debris, trash, glass, garbage, or other obstacles at a level consistent with the surrounding parking spaces to the satisfaction of the SFMTA and DPW. This is necessary so that on-street vehicle share parking spaces can be exempt from street sweeping regulations.
- VSOs must provide SFMTA with data, per SFMTA specifications, to monitor performance of shared vehicles stationed in permitted parking spaces and periodically evaluate the public utility of shared vehicle permits. At a minimum, data shall include, for each on-street vehicle location:
 - The total number of member reservations made each month
 - The average vehicle miles travelled (VMT) for member reservations in each month
 - The total hours which a vehicle was available for use by members, the total hours a vehicle was in use by members, and the number of unique users in the month.
- VSOs must agree to have no less than 15% of its on-street shared vehicle fleet in Zone 2 and no less than 15% of that fleet in Zone 3 (see Figure 1 above).

SFMTA's Responsibilities/Goals Under the Program

The SFMTA will maintain curb painting and signage for the permitted space.

SFMTA uses a three-tiered geographic "Pricing Zone" system (Figure 1) to incentivize equal distribution across the city. Permits for Zone 1 are most expensive, Zone 2 second most expensive and permits for Zone 3 are least expensive. The pricing incentivizes VSOs to place their vehicles in outer areas where the population is less dense and where transit coverage is thinner.



Figure 1: Shared Vehicle Parking Permit zones for parking lot and on-street permits

On-street permits and enforcement

- SFMTA will issue an On-Street Shared Vehicle Parking Permit that restricts the use of a permitted parking space to a member-available vehicle of the permittee VSO. VSO member-available vehicles parked at a permitted on-street parking space will be exempt from street sweeping, RPP, and other time limit restrictions.
- On-Street Shared Vehicle Parking Permits may be issued by the SFMTA at any time during the fiscal year but every permit shall expire on June 30 of each calendar year unless otherwise renewed or revoked.
- Shared Vehicles are subject to all parking rules and regulations when parked anywhere other than a permitted on-street shared vehicle parking space.
- A vehicle parked illegally in a designated on-street shared vehicle parking space may receive a citation (Transportation Code Section 7.5.52), for which the penalty is currently \$110, and may be towed (per Transportation Code Section 8.1).

- The SFMTA reserves the right to revoke a VSO's permit issued for a particular parking space at any time. The VSO will be provided with the option for a pre-revocation hearing within five business days. In the event that the SFMTA revokes a permit, the VSO must promptly remove the vehicle from the space within five business days of notice. In circumstances that pose a serious threat to public health or safety, the SFMTA reserves the right to immediately revoke the permit and/or remove the vehicle.

On-Street Permit Pricing

- The monthly fee for each space is determined by its location. The monthly fee for spaces in Zone 1 shall be \$285, \$180 in Zone 2, and \$50 in Zone 3.
- The intent of the price differences is to provide incentive to VSOs to place vehicles in less dense parts of the City that typically have less frequent transit service.
- SFMTA will bill VSOs for on-street shared vehicle parking space permits on a monthly basis, in advance of the nominal billing month. Permit invoice payments are due in full by the first day of the nominal billing month (e.g. June 1 for June permit fees). Late fees will be applied to permit invoices past due. Billing disputes will be heard and addressed, but invoices must be paid in full by date due; any adjustments will be applied to the next permit invoice.

On-street signage and markings

- The SFMTA may paint the curb a distinctive color, outline the parking space with a white stripe, and install stencils and signage to clearly identify that the space is to be used for shared vehicle parking only. The SFMTA will also post a sign designed by VSOs to identify the space.
 - The SFMTA will produce a 12" x 5" red and white "No Stopping" sign indicating that the parking space is for permitted shared vehicle use only, all other vehicles subject to towing (see Figure 2). VSOs will produce and provide the SFMTA with a square sticker showing the VSO's emblem, which will be attached to the sign by the SFMTA before installation. This sign will be installed to face the street.
 - VSOs will produce and provide the SFMTA with one 12" x 5" sign per space, displaying the VSO's emblem and identifying text (see example at Figure 3). This sign will be installed to face the sidewalk.



Figure 2: Shared Vehicle parking space sign (street-facing)



Figure 3: Shared Vehicle parking space sign (sidewalk-facing)

Parking space closures

- On-street parking lot spaces can be temporarily closed for construction or special events, with signs typically posted 72 hours in advance.
- SFMTA will endeavor to notify VSOs of these closures with as much advance notice as possible. However, not all space closures are communicated to SFMTA.
- VSO vehicles are subject to the same rules and restrictions as other vehicles, and are not exempt from temporary street closures.
- VSOs will be responsible for moving their vehicles from closed spaces and finding an alternate location, if necessary.
- The VSOs will be responsible for paying any parking citations received or any tow fees and fines associated if vehicles are towed.
- For space closures permitted by the Department of Public Works longer than a week in duration, DPW permitting will endeavor to establish a temporary shared vehicle parking space near the closed parking space as a condition of the closure permit. Tow requests called for closures which fail to meet this requirement will not be honored by the SFMTA.
- In addition, SFMTA staff will have the authority to create temporary on-street parking spaces when construction projects close existing parking spaces for a significant period of time (which is akin to the process used to issue the construction permits that cause the issue).

Performance monitoring

- The SFMTA seeks to ensure that these vehicles are well-utilized and are contributing the benefits to the public.
- The SFMTA will periodically review the usage of all shared on-street pods to reassess its performance standards, evaluate shared spaces, and revoke a VSO's permit for some spaces if, in the SFMTA's judgment, their usage is too low.

Policy for off-street permits

Application and approval process

- The SFMTA will accept requests from qualified VSOs for parking permits in SFMTA-administered parking lots and garages on a rolling basis.
- In SFMTA parking lots, no more than 30 percent of the spaces may be allocated for shared vehicles.
- In SFMTA parking garages, no more than 20 percent of the spaces may be allocated for shared vehicles.
- No one VSO may occupy more than 66 percent of spaces available for shared vehicles in any lot or garage.
- For garage permit requests, the SFMTA will allocate reserved monthly parking spaces depending on space availability and other constraints, at the SFMTA's discretion; not all requests may be granted, and a waiting list may be maintained. For garage permit allocations granted, the SFMTA will instruct garage operators to sell VSOs permits and facilitate VSO markings of permitted spaces (at VSOs' expense and in coordination with the garage operator). Shared vehicle parking permit fees shall be determined by the SFMTA and communicated to VSOs as those rates would be communicated to any other monthly-parking customer.
- For parking lot permit requests, the SFMTA will grant permits depending on space availability and other constraints, at the SFMTA's discretion; not all requests may be granted, and a waiting list may be maintained.

Parking space closures

- Off-street parking lot spaces can be temporarily closed for construction or special events, with signs typically posted 72 hours in advance.
 - SFMTA will endeavor to notify VSOs of these closures with as much advance notice as possible. However, not all space closures are communicated to SFMTA and there is not yet a centralized source for space closure information.
 - VSO vehicles are subject to the same rules and restrictions as other vehicles, and are not exempt from space closures, regardless of how little advance notice was provided.
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- VSOs will be responsible for moving their vehicles from closed spaces and finding an alternate location, if necessary.