

Reserved on-street parking spaces for use by car-share vehicles – Pilot Program in the downtown area (Sustainable Transportation Initiative)

Date:	August 21, 2009
To:	Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
From:	General Manager, Transportation Services
Wards:	Trinity-Spadina, Ward 20; Toronto Centre-Rosedale, Ward 27; Toronto Centre-Rosedale, Ward 28
Reference Number:	Pw09102te.top.doc

SUMMARY

Supporting the provision of on-street, reserved parking spaces for car-share vehicles in selected locations is one of the Sustainable Transportation Initiatives: Short-term Proposals adopted by City Council at its meeting on October 22 and 23, 2007 (Item PW9.2). This report is requesting approval of a pilot program that will allow Transportation Services to identify on-street parking areas exclusively for use by car-share vehicles. Use of the parking areas will be administered by means of a new class of car-sharing permit issued by Transportation Services to a car-share company/organization at an annual cost of \$200.00 for each permit plus applicable taxes (for the duration of the pilot program). The fee will cover the cost of implementing the pilot program (signs, pavement markings, bicycle rings where necessary). The pilot program is intended to be revenue neutral.

Subject to approval of this pilot program by the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee, a separate report will be submitted to Toronto and East York Community Council for approval to delineate a total of 6 car-share parking areas dispersed over 5 streets (Emily Street, Ed Mirvish Way, Jordan Street, Gould Street, and Mutual Street) in the downtown area, providing a total of 20 parking spaces.

If this proposal is approved, staff will monitor the pilot program over the ensuing year and report back to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee within one year after its implementation with their findings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that City Council:

1. Authorize the General Manager of Transportation Services to establish a new class of car-sharing parking permit and to issue such permits to a car-share organization/company at an annual cost of \$200.00 plus applicable taxes for each such permit, on the terms and conditions generally as set out in this report.
2. Authorize the City Solicitor, in consultation with the General Manager of Transportation Services, to make application to the Senior Regional Justice of the Ontario Court of Justice for set fines with respect to the offences created by the pilot program.
3. Request the General Manager of Transportation Services to evaluate the pilot program and report back to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee within one year after its implementation with his findings.

Financial Impact

Approval of the pilot program has no financial impact. Implementation of car-share vehicle parking areas is intended to be revenue neutral. The installation costs of delineating each car-share vehicle parking area will be recovered through the cost of each car-share parking permit issued to a car-share organization/company for a car-share vehicle.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer have reviewed this report and agree with the financial impact information.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

At its meeting of October 22 and 23, 2007, City Council supported, in principle, the short-term Sustainable Transportation Initiatives contained in a staff report dated September 19, 2007 to the Public Works Committee (Item PW9.2) in order to achieve, in part, the reduction targets for greenhouse gas emissions contained in the “Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan” approved by City Council.

Staff from Transportation Services, His Worship Mayor Miller’s office, Councillor Kyle Rae’s office, the Toronto Parking Authority, and representatives of the current car-share companies operating in Toronto have met on several occasions over the past 18 months to discuss initiating a pilot program that would identify Car-share Vehicle Parking Areas on streets at several locations in the downtown area for exclusive use by car-share vehicles.

COMMENTS

Car-sharing Background

Car-sharing is a program that offers vehicles for short-term rental to registered members of a car-share organization/company. Vehicles are located geographically throughout the City to serve members and are rented on an hourly basis. All vehicle costs (gas, maintenance, insurance, etc.) are included in the rental fee. Vehicles are assigned by the company to a specific location, checked out by the member for a specified time period, and returned to the same location at the end of the rental period.

Car-sharing is a long established program in Europe but the first large-scale program in North America originated in Portland, Oregon in 1998. There are two basic car-sharing business models: for-profit; and non-profit, which includes co-operatives.

Car-sharing in Toronto has been in place for the past few years. Only the for-profit model is operating in Toronto at this time. Currently two car-share companies, Zipcar and Autoshare, provide this service. In combination, these companies have over 12,000 registered members and operate a fleet of over 600 fuel efficient/hybrid vehicles, distributed across the City at approved locations on boulevards and in parking lots/garages.

Recognized benefits of car-sharing

Reduced transportation expenses:

Fixed costs associated with owning a vehicle are considered a major household expense, second only to housing itself. By comparison, the fixed costs associated with car-sharing are low. When someone owns a car, the initial investment and maintenance costs are considerable, promoting more frequent use of the vehicle to get perceived “value” out of the investment. The costs of car-sharing are directly proportional to the amount of time the vehicle is actually driven. Therefore, members have a strong financial incentive to drive less. Car-share members report they spend less time driving and use public transit, cycle or walk more frequently, reducing their transportation costs.

Reduced dependency on private vehicle ownership:

A major benefit of car-sharing is the potential of the program to reduce transportation costs by reducing the dependency on private vehicle ownership. By providing convenient access to a vehicle for occasional trips, a household might be able to forego ownership of a car or second car. A report from the (US) Transit Cooperative Research Program, *Car-Sharing: Where and How It Succeeds* (TCRP Report 108, 2005), indicates that on average, each car-share vehicle replaces about 15 vehicles in private ownership. This means fewer vehicles on the road and less competition for parking spaces, particularly in a densely populated urban environment.

Environmental improvements:

Based on a survey conducted in Portland, Oregon, members of a car-share company reported reducing their vehicle miles traveled annually by over 50%. Fewer vehicles on the road means fewer vehicles emitting harmful pollutants.

Benefits to the City

The value of car-sharing to the City and its residents cannot be measured in a monetary sense at this time. Implementing on-street Car Share Vehicle Parking Areas as a pilot program is intended to be revenue neutral. However, if future expansion occurs, there is the opportunity to generate revenue from the issuance of permits. The true benefits to the City are:

- a reduction in air pollution from vehicle emissions that will contribute towards the City achieving the goals of the “Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan” approved by City Council; and
- a reduction in the number of cars on the road that could reduce wear and tear on road infrastructure and maintenance costs.

Residents of the City also will receive value from this initiative through:

- the potential to reduce their transportation costs;
- use of a car-share vehicle as an alternative to individual car ownership; and
- the convenience of a car when needed without the operating costs.

However, to realize these benefits car-share vehicles must be highly visible, readily accessible and easily reachable by public transit, cycling or walking.

On-street parking for car-share vehicles

Several cities in North America, including Washington DC, Vancouver, Portland, Philadelphia, Seattle, and Arlington VA, among others have car-share organizations operating in their municipality and provide on-street parking areas exclusively for use by car-share vehicles. The number of on-street spaces provided ranges from about 20 in Seattle to over 80 in Washington DC.

Redevelopment currently underway or proposed in the downtown core and surrounding area of the City is eliminating surface parking lots and reducing opportunity for using off-street parking areas for car-share vehicles. Although it is possible in some circumstances to make arrangements to house car-share vehicles in commercial parking garages, high visibility locations are preferable to promote the concept of car sharing. This has prompted the two car-share companies currently operating in Toronto, Zipcar and Autosshare, to request Transportation Services to designate on-street parking areas exclusively for use by car-share vehicles.

Policy

Supporting the provision of on-street, reserved parking spaces for car-share vehicles in selected locations is one of the Sustainable Transportation Initiative: Short-term Proposals adopted by City Council at its meeting on October 22 and 23, 2007 (Item PW9.2, Recommendation 6(c)).

Pilot Program

As a means of implementing and evaluating this sustainable transportation initiative, Transportation Services recommends undertaking a one-year pilot program by designating Car-share Vehicle Parking Areas on various streets in the downtown core and/or immediate surrounding area for exclusive use by car-share vehicles.

Investigation

There are numerous competing curb lane demands in the downtown area. Therefore, the impact of identifying car-share vehicle parking areas on other road activity, such as curb-side deliveries, public transit operations, taxicab stands, road maintenance and general on-street parking was considered. To determine where car-share vehicle parking areas could be identified for the pilot program each location had to satisfy the following criteria.

- No existing on-street parking spaces are eliminated;
- Vehicles can park at each location on a 24/7 basis;
- Each parking area can provide a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 6 parking spaces;
- The location of the parking area will not adversely impact on safe and efficient traffic operation;
- The parking area is located close to one or more TTC routes; and
- There are bicycle rings/racks near the parking area (or these devices can be installed nearby) to safely secure bicycles.

In addition staff consulted with the Ward Councillor about each suggested location in their Ward.

Based on the above criteria, 6 locations have been selected as sites where car-share vehicle parking areas could be delineated and evaluated for an on-street pilot program. Since parking regulatory changes are delegated to Community Council for approval, subject to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee endorsing the pilot program, the following locations will be recommended under a separate report to Toronto and East York Community Council as sites to delineate Car-share Vehicle Parking Areas:

- on the east side of Emily Street, from a point 9 metres north of Wellington Street West to a point 22 metres further north (4 spaces);
- on the east side of Jordan Street, from a point 12 metres south of King Street West to a point 22 metres further south (4 spaces);

- on the west side of Ed Mirvish Way, from a point 34 metres north of King Street West to a point 22 metres further north (4 spaces);
- on the north side of Gould Street, from a point 6 metres east of the east curb of Dalhousie Street to a point 24 metres further east (4 spaces);
- on the west side of Mutual Street, from a point 12 metres south of Dundas Street East to a point 11 metres further south (2 spaces); and
- on the west side of Mutual Street, from a point 29 metres south of Dundas Street East to a point 11 metres further south (2 spaces).

Since no existing on-street parking spaces are being eliminated, the pilot program has no impact on revenue generated from pay-and-display parking in the downtown area.

It is recommended that an on-street parking pilot program for car-share vehicles be implemented by the establishment of a new class of “car-sharing” parking permit and that the program be applicable to car-share organizations/companies as a class rather than to a particular company or companies.

For the purpose of this initiative the following definitions shall apply:

- “Car-sharing” is a shared use vehicle program offering short-term rental service of motor vehicles owned by a car-share organization/company to individuals or businesses who are members.
- “Car-share organization/company” is an organization or company that provides pre-approved members with access to a Car-share vehicle which is parked for convenient access at geographically distributed locations throughout the City for the payment of an hourly fee that includes the cost of fuel, maintenance, and insurance.
- “Car-share vehicle” is a shared use vehicle belonging to a car-share organization/company, identified with the organization/company’s business logo and provided for short-term rental by members of the car-share organization/company.
- “Car-share Vehicle Parking Area” is an area on a street delineated by a combination of advisory/regulatory signs and pavement markings and authorized by the appropriate Community Council exclusively for parking by car-share vehicles.
- “Car-share parking permit” is a permit issued by the General Manager of Transportation Services authorizing parking of a particular car-share vehicle in a specific Car-share Vehicle Parking Area.

Application of the pilot program

Each specific Car-share Vehicle Parking Area will be identified with a unique area number (CVP-Area 1 to CVP-Area 6) for the purpose of the pilot program. The area number will be indicated on the signs posted on the street to delineate the parking area. To identify a vehicle that is authorized to park in a designated parking area, a Car-share parking permit (similar to an overnight parking permit) will be issued for each parking space in the Car-share Vehicle Parking Area. The car-share parking permit will indicate the CVP-Area in which the vehicle is authorized to park and will include the license number of the vehicle. It will be required that a valid car-share parking permit be affixed to the lower left-hand corner of the windshield of the particular car-share vehicle. Transportation Services proposes a non-refundable cost of \$200.00 for each permit, plus applicable taxes, to cover the costs of implementing each Car-share Vehicle Parking Area. The car-share parking permit will be valid for a period of one year, unless otherwise terminated by the General Manager of Transportation Services. A total of 20 permits (one for each authorized parking space) will be issued for the pilot program. Permits will be issued on a “first come basis” to Car-share organizations/companies that satisfy the above-noted definition.

Enforcement

Enforcement is a key to ensuring that the parking spaces at each Car-share Vehicle Parking Area are not occupied by unauthorized vehicles when an assigned car-share vehicle is returned to its parking area. The permit displayed on the windshield of the vehicle coupled with the logo of the respective car-share company (affixed by the organization/company to the body of its vehicles) will assist enforcement officers in identifying which vehicles are authorized to occupy the Car-share Vehicle Parking Area.

Chapter 400 of the former City of Toronto Municipal Code (the current authority for all streets identified in the pilot program) must be amended to prohibit the parking or standing of an unauthorized vehicle in a designated car-share vehicle parking area. Based on fines established in other municipalities with on-street car-share parking spaces, a set fine of \$60.00 for unlawfully parking or standing an unauthorized vehicle in an area designated as a Car-share Vehicle Parking Area is appropriate.

Regulatory amendments

The site-specific by-law amendments required to implement the Car-share Vehicle Parking Areas at the locations noted above will be detailed in our report to Toronto and East York Community Council.

Except in the case of a permit issued under Chapter 925 of the Toronto Municipal Code (residential permit parking) or in the case of a vehicle displaying a disabled parking permit, parking is allowed for a maximum period of three hours unless otherwise signed on all streets in Toronto. To facilitate the operation of an on-street car-share parking permit program it is necessary to amend Chapter 400 of the former City of Toronto Municipal Code to allow a car-share vehicle with a car-share parking permit to park for an indefinite amount of time while not in use in its designated Car-share Vehicle Parking

Area. Also, it is necessary to amend the appropriate by-law(s) to provide that a vehicle displaying a disabled parking permit, or issued with a filming permit is not allowed to park in a Car-share Vehicle Parking Area.

Impact on road maintenance

Transportation Services notes that the downtown area is a tourist and entertainment district with high pedestrian volumes. Staff of the Road Operations section concentrate their effort in this area to keep it clean. Since most on-street parking areas in downtown Toronto experience a high rate of parking turnover, staff generally experiences few problems in maintaining the streets clean and clear of debris and snow accumulation.

It is anticipated that the car-share vehicles will be checked out from the parking areas on a relatively frequent basis. Nevertheless, at times cars will be parked for lengthy periods. Car-share Vehicle Parking Areas will make cleaning operations more labour intensive, requiring manual cleaning in the vicinity of the parked vehicles. During winter months parking will affect how the road is ploughed and how snow is removed. Car-share Vehicle Parking Areas will prevent ploughing of snow to the curb when cars are parked. Although similar situations occur in some residential neighbourhoods in the central area of the City, there will be an adverse impact on staff's ability to sweep/plough sections of streets where Car-share Vehicle Parking Areas are present.

Evaluation

Transportation Services, in consultation with the car-share companies will monitor vehicle usage and turnover of vehicles housed at each on-street car-share vehicle parking area and report back to the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee on the impact of the pilot program within one year after its implementation.

CONCLUSION

Car-sharing is recognized internationally as an initiative that has the potential to reduce transportation costs by reducing the dependency on private vehicle ownership. Car-share members spend less time driving and use public transit, cycle or walk more frequently. Providing convenient access to car-share vehicles in highly visible on-street locations enhances public awareness of the program.

Approving implementation of an on-street Car-share Vehicle Parking Area pilot program in the downtown area:

- has the potential to reduce air pollution from vehicle emissions thereby contributing towards the City achieving the goals of the “Climate Change, Clean Air and Sustainable Energy Action Plan” approved by City Council;
- has the potential to reduce the number of cars in private ownership and on the road, thereby reducing demands on parking and wear-and-tear on/maintenance costs of road infrastructure;

- addresses one of the Sustainable Transportation Initiative: Short-term Proposals adopted by City Council; and
- gives staff the opportunity to evaluate the initiative in a functional sense and determine the viability of expanding the program into other areas of the City.

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