



ZONING ADMINISTRATOR BULLETIN NO. 6

Car-Share Requirements and Guidelines for Car-Share Spaces

Section 307 of the City Planning Code mandates the Zoning Administrator to issue and adopt such rules, regulations and interpretations as are in the Zoning Administrator’s opinion, necessary to administer and enforce the provisions of the Planning Code. [Section 7.502 of the San Francisco Charter charges the Zoning Administrator with the responsibility of administering and enforcing the Planning Code.]

Date: AUGUST 2010	Relevant Code Sections: 166 (CAR SHARING)
Supercedes Bulletin #6 (“Car Sharing”), published October 2009.	

PURPOSE:

This Bulletin establishes protocols for the Department’s administration of car-share requirements, distinguishes between different types of car-share parking spaces, and provides guidelines for the physical configuration of car-share spaces.

1. Car-share Basics

OVERVIEW:

Generally speaking, a car-share program is a membership-based service that allows members to rent vehicles for use, typically on a short-term basis. Depending on the organization and type of membership, members may pay an annual membership fee, as well as hourly rates for the use of a vehicle. The rental rates include all costs associated with the vehicle, including gas, insurance, and maintenance. Vehicles are reserved in advance and are parked at clustered “pods” in various locations throughout the city. Car-share programs can achieve multiple public and private goals, including reducing the need for parking, improving the environment, and giving individuals the mobility of an “on-call” vehicle without the expense of vehicle ownership. Such programs are complementary to urban environments, where most destinations can be reached by walking, biking, or using transit, but a car may be needed for occasional trips.

This section of the report summarizes existing definitions and creates new distinctions between different types of car-share spaces that had not previously been defined by the Department.

1.1 Types of Car-share Spaces

The City's inventory of car-share parking has grown through various avenues. While some of the inventory consists of spaces required by the Planning Commission and provided free-of-charge, the majority of today's existing spaces have been provided voluntarily by private owners leasing parking to car-share organizations or through leases within publicly-owned parking garages. The continued provision of voluntary spaces should be encouraged.

For the purposes of this bulletin, the Planning Department recognizes two types of car-share spaces:

- **Required spaces:** Spaces required by Planning Code Section 166 or by the Planning Commission as a condition of project approval. These spaces are generally provided in projects with 50 or more residential units, 25 or more commercial spaces, or in standalone garages not affiliated with another development project. Required spaces must remain free of charge to car-share organizations, and must be dedicated to use only by such organizations. A restriction must be placed on the property to record this commitment and associated conditions. If no car-share organization is willing and able to immediately occupy the spaces, required car-share spaces may be utilized for other purposes and by other parties, according to the procedures described in Planning Code Section 166(b)(3)(D).
- **Voluntary spaces:** Non-required spaces that are leased to car-share providers for a fee. Any car-share space that is leased to a car-share organization for a fee and/or is not limited by a recorded restriction to use only by a car-share organization is a "voluntary" car-share space.

1.2 Definition of Car-share Service

In order to be considered a "car-share service," per Planning Code Section 166(b)(1), a car-share organization must operate in a manner that features all of the following characteristics:

- Member-based service, where such service is available to members only. Additional demonstration of membership may include annual or monthly membership fees, or membership cards.
- Vehicles are available to members at unstaffed locations only, and members access vehicles without interacting with staff or filling out paperwork for each car usage.
- Vehicles are accessible to members at all times, 24 hours per day, seven days per week.
- Vehicles are available by reservation only. Reservations may be made by automated systems, such as via telephone or the Internet
- Vehicles are available for reservation at least on an hourly basis, or at smaller intervals.
- Car-share service must provide insurance and maintenance of the vehicle fleet as part of membership at no extra charge.

1.3 Certification of a Car-share Organization

The Planning Department will certify car-share organizations that meet certain criteria and follow the process specified by Planning Code Section 166(b)(2). Car-share spaces may only satisfy the requirements of Section 166 if they are made available and at no cost to certified car-share organizations. Submittals for certification must include the following:

- 1) Letter to the Zoning Administrator clearly stating the following information:
 - Name of Organization; Primary and Secondary Contacts (Name, Title, Telephone, Fax, Email); Mailing Address of Organization.
 - Request for certification of the organization as a “Certified Car-share Organization” per Planning Code Section 166.
 - A brief description of the organization and how its service meets the characteristics of Section 166(b)(1).
 - A brief executive summary of the findings (two pages maximum) of the certification study described below, specifically describing satisfaction of two or more of the listed environmental performance measures.

- 2) A written report called a “Car-share Certification Study”. The study must be prepared by an independent third party academic institution or transportation consulting firm that clearly demonstrates, based on a statistically significant analysis of quantitative data, that the car-share organization has achieved two or more of the following environmental performance goals in any market where they have operated for at least two years:
 - Lower household automobile ownership among members compared to the general population in the market area.
 - Lower annual vehicle miles traveled per member household compared to the general population in the market area.
 - Lower annual vehicle emissions per member household compared to the general population in the market area.
 - Higher rates of transit usage, walking, bicycling and other non-automobile modes of transportation usage for commute trips among members compared to the general population in the market area.

- 3) Fee payment. A check should be submitted, made payable to “San Francisco Planning Department.” Notation line should indicate: “ZA Car-share Certification – [NAME OF CAR-SHARE ORGANIZATION].” NOTE: Fees are adjusted annually. Please refer to the fee for a “Zoning Administrator Written Determination” in the current Planning Department Fee Schedule before submitting payment.

The Planning Department Fee Schedule can be found on our web site www.sfplanning.org

The certification submittal will be considered through the Zoning Administrator Determination process. Once issued, the Zoning Administrator determination of certification will be available for public review and may be appealed within 15 days to the Board of Appeals.

2. Required Car-share Spaces in New Development

OVERVIEW:

Planning Code Section 166 (adopted in August 2005) requires that, for certain developments that provide parking, a certain number of car-share parking spaces must also be provided. Section 166 also includes provisions regarding access to car-share parking spaces, recordation of the spaces, and procedures for release of spaces for parking of non-car-share vehicles if they are not used by a certified car-share organization.

Visit the [Department's website](#) for an inventory of approved projects and their associated car-share parking space requirements.

2.1 Number of Required Spaces

For developments subject to Planning Code Section 166, car-share parking spaces must be provided in the following amounts:

Residential Units

Number of Residential Units	Number of Required Car-share spaces
0-49	None
50-200	1
201 or more	2, plus 1 for every 200 units over 200

Non-Residential Uses

Number of Parking Spaces for Non-Residential Uses or in a Non-Accessory Parking Facility	Number of Required Car-share spaces
0-24	None
25-49	1
50 or more	2, plus 1 for every 40 spaces over 50

The required car-share spaces may be provided within the new development, or on another property within 800 feet of the building site.

2.2 Design, Access, and Signage

It is critical that car-share members be able to access parking spaces located within secure garages. Early consideration of the architectural and access needs for the garage to accommodate the required car-share spaces can avoid expensive plan changes further in the process. The garage must be designed in the early planning stages so that security concerns do not compromise the ability to meet these requirements. Project sponsors should seek advance arrangements to garner interest from a car-share organization and may use this early contact to solicit feedback on building plans. Secure bicycle parking near the car-share parking spaces should be considered to accommodate members who ride bicycles to pick up the vehicles.

The following are the minimum requirements for design, access, and signage to fulfill the car-share parking requirement:

- Required spaces must be accessible to car-share members at all times. Direct pedestrian access from a public sidewalk is preferable for access by members who do not reside in the building where the spaces are located. Access may be provided via a secure door that requires key card access.

- Identifying signage on the exterior of the building or garage must be provided to clearly identify the location and presence of car-share vehicles. Individual car-share spaces must also be clearly identified with signage to prevent use of the space by non-car-share vehicles.
- Car-share parking spaces must meet the dimensional standards of Planning Code Section 154(a)(1)-(2). Specifically, standard sized spaces shall have a minimum area of 144 square feet, and compact spaces shall have a minimum area of 112.5 feet, configured in a usable shape. These size requirements do not apply to valet spaces, or to spaces that are provided by a mechanical storage system (“stackers” or “lifts”). Independently accessible parking spaces are required for car-share spaces that are required by Section 166 and are preferable for non-required spaces. Mechanically-stacked or valet arrangements are allowable in facilities in which all vehicles in the facility are stored by such means, provided that the car-share vehicles are readily available to members 24 hours per day.

2.3 Recording an NSR

A Notice of Special Restrictions (NSR) is the most effective method in which the City can track unique conditions of a property and the overall supply of car-share parking. Effective administration of a car-share program is dependent on a comprehensive understanding of parking supply. City monitoring of car-share parking can help ensure that the City’s needs are met. Additionally, recording an NSR demonstrates a commitment to provide car-share spaces and details how car-share will operate at the specific location.

Prior to the issuance of the first building or site permit for a project, an NSR must be reviewed, approved, and recorded for the property indicating the requirements of Planning Code Section 166, including the minimum number and proposed location of car-share spaces. If applicable, the NSR will also record a copy of a motion for approval from the Planning Commission. The project sponsor shall promptly provide a copy of the recorded NSR to the Planning Department, which shall be attached to the site permit.

2.4 Interest from Certified Car-share Organizations

It is never too early to solicit interest from a certified car-share organization. A letter of interest shall include the following information:

- Address of location
- Number of spaces the operator can commit to occupy
- Location of spaces
- Expiration of interest
- Intended duration of operation if possible
- Name and number of car-share organization contact

The project sponsor shall make all reasonable efforts to contact and enter into a binding agreement with a certified car-share organization for use of the required spaces before the first site permit is approved. Prior to the issuance of a site permit or a first certificate of occupancy, the project sponsor must either obtain letters of interest and agreements with a certified car-share

organization, or must demonstrate that they have performed sufficient written outreach to all certified car-share organizations notifying of the pending availability of parking spaces. A copy of the agreement or a letter of interest, or copies of outreach letters must be submitted to the Planning Department.

2.5 Use of car-share spaces for non-carshare parking

A property owner with required car-share spaces who is unable to secure a car-share operator may utilize the space for non-car-share parking. The project sponsor or property owner shall submit to the Department written correspondence from all certified car-share organizations declining their intent to operate at the required car-share spaces. However, upon a ninety (90) day advance written notice to the property owner from a certified car-share organization, the property owner shall terminate any non car-share leases for required spaces currently unutilized by a certified car-share organization and shall make the spaces available to the car-share organization for its use of such spaces.

If at any time, a certified car-share organization using the required spaces terminates its agreement with the property owner, the property owner shall notify all other certified car-share organizations of this availability. At no time may a certified car-share organization enter into or maintain an agreement with a property owner to hold required car-share spaces without active intent to use them immediately, such that other car-share organizations are prevented from using the spaces.

3. Voluntary Car-share Spaces

OVERVIEW:

This section describes how the current controls would apply to the creation of new spaces that are independent of a new development. Car-share spaces shall be generally permitted in the same manner as residential parking. All residential spaces may be converted to car share spaces, based on the following rationale: 1) Existing city regulations allow for all on-site required accessory parking to be rented or sold to a resident within 1,250 feet from the parking space, and 2) Car-share pods generally serve the members residing within the immediate vicinity. Required car-share spaces shall satisfy or may substitute for any required residential parking.

Controls for the provision of car-share shall address both the conversion of existing parking spaces into car-share use and the provision of net new car-share spaces (i.e. without replacing, converting, or otherwise affecting existing or proposed parking). Generally, car-share parking spaces may be located where other parking is permitted. The provision of non-required car-share parking spaces shall also generally be an appropriate use of “vehicular use areas” in all districts.

The Mayor's Office is preparing draft legislation that will, among other things, establish a new definition of "vehicle use areas". Should that legislation be adopted, it shall govern the final definition of "vehicle use areas". In the meantime and for the purposes of this Bulletin, "vehicular use areas" are defined as any area of the lot not located within any enclosed or partially enclosed structure and that is devoted to a use by or for motor vehicles including parking (accessory or non-accessory); and automotive uses as defined in Section 223 that are not enclosed by a structure, including but not limited to storage of automobiles, trucks or other vehicles; gasoline stations; car washes; motor vehicle repair shops; loading areas; and service areas and drives. Spaces within vehicular use areas must not impede overall vehicular circulation, and may not block access to loading or service areas required by the Planning Code.

3.1 Conversion of Existing Parking

The following controls shall govern the conversion of existing parking spaces to voluntary parking spaces dedicated to car-share:

- **Conversion of Existing Required Residential Parking** is permitted as of right and would not require any permit reviews or entitlement approvals.
- **Conversion of Existing Required Commercial Parking** shall require the Zoning Administrator to determine whether the elimination of a commercial parking space can be granted through existing exceptional or extraordinary circumstances as described in Planning Code Section 305 for Variance proceedings.
- **Conversion of Existing Non-Required Residential Parking** is permitted as of right and would not require any permit reviews or entitlement approvals.
- **Conversion of Existing Non-Required Commercial Parking** is permitted as of right and would not require any permit reviews or entitlement approvals.

3.2 Creation of New Spaces

The following controls shall govern the creation of new voluntary parking spaces dedicated to car-share where no parking spaces previously existed. Controls for the conversion of existing spaces is discussed under Section 3.1.

1) New car-share spaces located within existing Vehicle Use Area, or are not greater than permitted parking quantities:

- **No Permit Required** - When no changes to curb cuts are proposed and conforms to all applicable code provisions including screening of vehicles.
- **Permit Required** - Required when changes to curb cuts are proposed, or other permitted modifications that would normally require a building permit. Any non-conformity with code provisions as a result of the new car-share spaces will require a request for a variance.

2) New car-share spaces that would trigger Planning Code review: All new car-share spaces that trigger review under Planning Code Sections 303, 309, or 329 must undergo the respective processes for accessory parking in the applicable zoning district. All new car-share spaces that exceed the Planning Code limitations on the amount of parking shall be considered either a parking lot or a parking garage and may only be permitted as such as a principal use.¹

3.3 Design Controls

No car-share spaces shall be permitted in driveways, required set-backs, or required open space. The Planning Code prohibits driveways from being used as parking spaces of any type. All car-share spaces shall adhere to screening, landscaping, and other design requirements for parking as detailed by the Planning Code and adopted design guidelines. In addition, parking spaces within residential zoning districts shall be required to comply with the Residential Design Guidelines. Car-share spaces must not impede the usability of a primary use or general circulation of the property, and all car-share spaces shall meet the standards of Planning Code Section 154 for minimum dimensions and accessibility.

¹ See principal use controls for parking: 1) Community Parking Lot (Sec 890.7); 2) Community Residential Garage (890.8); 3) Community Residential Automobile Parking (790.10); 4) Parking Lot (156); 5) Major Parking Garage in C-3(158); 6) Non-Accessory Parking Garage (158.1); 7) Vehicle Storage and Access (209.7) and; 8) Parking Lot, Storage Garage, and Major Parking Garage (223 (l-p)).



**San Francisco
Planning**

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