

# TRIPPING IN MANAYUNK



## Car Sharing Comes to Philadelphia!

Car sharing is a new adventure for Philadelphia -- and already there are two options from which to choose. What is car sharing? It is a program that makes vehicles available to people on a per-use basis, usually via membership in an organization. This way, a person can use a car as needed, and pay based on how many miles driven and how long it takes. Car sharing has the potential to reduce the number of cars driving around Philadelphia.

The two programs are similar. One is a non-profit called PhillyCarShare, and the other is a for-profit company called Zipcar, which is operating in several cities (such as Washington D.C. and New York City).

PhillyCarShare is up and running, with cars available for use in two Center City locations. You might have seen them in the Fresh Fields on South Street. PhillyCarShare's

mission is to reduce automobile dependency in the Philadelphia region through community-based car sharing -- a goal reached by improving neighborhood livability; increasing transit ridership, walking, and biking; and improving air quality for starters. Using PhillyCarShare costs a driver 50 cents per mile, including gas, an hourly charge of \$3 per hour, a one-time application fee of \$25, and a \$10 per month membership charge.

Zipcar's program is still in the organizational stage and has similar costs involved, with both a membership fee, a security deposit, as well as hourly rates.



One of the major differences between the two organizations is how they locate their cars. PhillyCarShare hopes to have their cars citywide; Zipcar usually locates their cars in neighborhoods with the densest populations. For example, New York City's Zipcar program has cars located in Brooklyn, Lower Manhattan, the Upper East Side, and the Upper West Side. Both provide a variety of small compact cars.

There are many benefits of car sharing. First of all, it's

undeniably cheaper. The American Automobile Association estimates that it costs an average of about \$8,000 a year, or around \$700 a month to operate and maintain a car. In comparison, the average car share member pays less than \$200 per month in costs.

Other benefits include:

1. The convenience of owning a car without any of the problems of ownership -- no maintenance, no insurance payments, and no need to worry about finding a parking space at the end of the day.
2. Car sharing eliminates the large, up-front investment needed to purchase a car.
3. Members can access a variety of vehicle types and can choose among them according to specific needs.
4. Car sharing uses up less parking in the neighborhood, making local streets less cluttered.
5. Car sharing also reduces car use and increases use of other transportation options such as mass transit, biking, or walking.

6. Decreased car use decreases air pollution and traffic congestion.



zipcar®  
wheels when you want them™

Manayunk is ideally suited for car sharing. It's a neighborhood with easily accessible public transportation -- including trains, buses, and the CART shuttle.

Additionally, most people agree that parking and congestion are major local problems.

And although some of the local traffic comes from people who come to Manayunk to enjoy its restaurants and bars, corporate car sharing is a viable possibility for local businesses in the area. It could eventually provide local businesses with the vehicles it needs without needing to maintain a small fleet or pay for parking.

You can contact either organization for more information or details on how to join. Zipcar can be contacted at 866.4zipcar or at [info@zipcar.com](mailto:info@zipcar.com). PhillyCarShare can be reached at (215) 386-0988 or at [info@phillycarshare.org](mailto:info@phillycarshare.org)

## Does Cheap Parking Put More Cars on the Road?

A recent article in the Washington Post raises the issue that perhaps the biggest obstacle to getting people to leave their cars at home is the fact that free or subsidized parking is available from the capital's largest employer – the federal government. Talk about a financial incentive! If the expense of parking is not an issue, then it becomes harder to convince people to take mass transit.

A survey by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments found that 68 percent of Washington D.C. area commuters have access to free parking at work. That doesn't include commuters who get subsidized parking. A separate survey by Metro, Washington D.C.'s public transportation agency, found that people who have free parking at work are half as likely to take Metro or the bus as those who don't have free parking.

But back to the federal government. The greater Washington area has just over 29,000 parking spaces that the government owns. That does not include the Pentagon's parking lots with about 9,000 spaces. Federal agencies also pick up the tab for thousands of parking spaces in buildings where they lease space. The agencies have

the choice of passing along the costs to employees or to taxpayers (usually the taxpayers). Some spaces cost taxpayers more than \$1,200 each per year.

The National Institutes of Health, located in Bethesda, Maryland, has its own Metro stop. Yet 8,844 parking spaces are provided free of charge – while commercial lots in the area charge \$105 a month. The agency also spends \$6 million annually for 8,365 spaces in satellite lots and office buildings where they lease space.

The Department of Veterans Affairs spends \$11,300 per month to subsidize parking. The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Government Printing Office charge employees \$40 per month for parking when market rates at nearby garages are nearly four times higher.

The cost of cheap parking is borne out on the roads. While it may be "cheaper" to drive to work, solely basing costs on out-of-pocket expenditures misses a lot of other costs, such as congestion, air pollution, lost time from sitting in traffic, road and parking lot infrastructure and maintenance, and the spread of the region's sprawling development.

Similar problems plague the Philadelphia area as well. Fortunately, there are ways to combat this issue. TransitChek is just one way to make taking public transportation a more financially attractive option for local commuters. TransitChek, the region's transit voucher program, rewards employers with tax breaks for its employees who use public transportation to commute to work. The program works in three flexible ways:

1. Employers can elect to provide this benefit to employees in addition to salary, as part of their benefits package;
2. Employees can pay for the vouchers through a pre-tax payroll deduction offered by their employer;
3. Employers and employees can share the cost-for instance, an employer could provide a \$30 voucher, and employees would pay for a portion of it pre-tax.

By using TransitChek, commuters can buy tickets, tokens, or passes on all major transit systems in one step. Commuters will benefit from it each time they step onto a bus or train (and not into their cars) and they'll save money at the same time!

**Oops!** In some copies of the last newsletter, we made mention of the movie Bull Durham, and the newsletter should have said Field of Dreams! Guess we should brush up on our Kevin Costner films!



Clean Air Council  
135 S. 19th, Suite 300  
Philadelphia, PA 19103

**Check out the Clean Air Council's website at <http://www.cleanair.org>**