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ORIGINAL

CAR SHARING, CITY  
CARSHARE, NONPROFIT,  
RIDE-SHARING

## CITY CARSHARE GROWS DESPITE CORPORATE COMPETITORS



City CarShare announced new "pods" for their car-sharing service last week as they challenge corporate competitors for market share and survival. (Frank Farm/FrankFarm.org via Flickr)

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With their idealistic mission to make the Bay greener, Bay Area nonprofit City CarShare is fighting back against larger, more well-funded corporate competition.

City CarShare's goal of creating a greener car fleet to minimize their carbon footprint helps keep their gas costs low. Efforts to cut costs means their cars are available to a wider audience.

The car sharing organization expanded its Bay Area presence last week by opening 14 new locations, or pods, as the company calls them. They also reopened three San Francisco pods bringing their total to 239 in the Bay Area.

City CarShare rents its vehicles on an hourly basis to qualified drivers who pick them up at various stations around town. Cars must be returned to the same location where they were picked up.

Anita Daley, City CarShare marketing director, said their mission statement combines with their business model to give the company an added advantage:

“As a nonprofit we try and make car sharing accessible to everyone. ... We don’t have a large advertising budget like other companies with millions of dollars.”

Founded in 2001, City CarShare, the largest nonprofit car sharing organization in the country, operates solely in the Bay Area. The group finds themselves in the middle of a heated battle with corporate competitors like Zipcar, which recently raised [\\$60 million in startup capital](#).

Private car-sharing programs — like RelayRides and GetAround — have also become an alternative to individual car ownership by allowing drivers to use other people’s cars for short periods of time.

Ride sharing companies have also emerged as competition in recent years. Services like Uber and Sidecar compete against city taxicabs which are notoriously difficult to flag down.

City CarShare hopes their use of electric cars, hybrids and other low emission vehicles will set them apart from their competitors. Daley said these vehicles are primarily intended for local trips and so fit easily into the car sharing program:

“Electric vehicles and car sharing go hand in hand.”

Originally targeted 25 to 34-year-olds, City CarShare has since expanded their target market after years of raising awareness about their product.

The idea of part-time car ownership first appealed to those living along BART and Muni lines. Later, Daley said the organization was able to expand by opening pods close by existing pods:

“Wrapping people’s brain around it was the difficult part. ... As a nonprofit we have to be smart about how we expand.”

Now that car sharing has become more mainstream, a nonprofit like City CarShare needs to look for ways to remain competitive.

These efforts have led to the lowest prices in the industry, which start at \$5 an hour and include insurance and roadside assistance. Their fleet also boasts wheelchair-accessible cars as well as subsidized rates for low or moderate-income users.

City CarShare’s [new pod locations](#) include Alameda, Berkeley, Oakland and San Francisco.

<http://sfbay.ca/2013/06/05/city-carshare-grows-despite-corporate-competitors/#ixzz2VMqGthkU>