



City of Wilmington

News from the Office of Mayor James M. Baker

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Mayor Baker Brings the Car Sharing Transportation Concept to Wilmington

City Partners with 'PhillyCarShare-Delaware' to Reduce City Transportation Costs and Introduce the Benefits of Car Sharing to Wilmington's Urban Population

The City of Wilmington today unveiled yet another program that the City's Mayor is hoping will be beneficial from both an environmental and financial standpoint to citizens. Mayor James M. Baker announced today the City has agreed to a one-year trial Car Share Program for City employees in partnership with PhillyCarShare, a non-profit organization that operates a fleet of "cars by the hour." Under the program, 15 employees from four different City Departments will share two vehicles provided by "PhillyCarShare-Delaware," the non-profit's local brand. The City will pay PhillyCarShare about \$1,400 a month per vehicle which includes coverage for insurance, gas, maintenance, and keeping the cars clean.

Under the car share concept, the vehicles will be parked in reserved parking spaces on French Street; once registered for the program, City employees will simply reserve one of the cars online or by telephone and use their specially provided key fobs to access the car and drive away. Although the program initially is only available to City of Wilmington employees in the trial, 'PhillyCarShare-Delaware' is planning on opening its program to local businesses and City residents in the near future.

In recent years, the City has introduced or initiated a number of programs that are both environmentally responsible and fiscally prudent. These include a curbside recycling program; a new method of controlling combined sewer overflows called Real Time Control; participation with the U.S. Conference of Mayors national movement to conserve energy resources; a partnership with New Castle County on a new energy savings plan for the Redding City/County Building; and a citywide program of beautification and preservation of City parks and open spaces. Mayor Baker said the car share concept is the latest of these "greening" efforts.

"The purpose of the car share program is twofold," said Mayor James M. Baker. "First, I am interested in determining whether the program can reduce the amount of money the City spends on vehicle operation and maintenance costs. It is very costly to operate our fleet of vehicles, and if there is a more cost-effective way of providing these services—without compromising performance—then we have the responsibility to give the program a try."

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“Secondly, I would like to introduce the cost-share approach to the City’s urban residents, who might want to take advantage of car-sharing in the near future. Car sharing has proven to be very popular in several cities and might be a viable option for Wilmington residents. With insurance rates what they are, and with the limited availability of parking spaces, PhillyCareShare is an excellent way to avoid those frustrations.”

The City will evaluate the program at the six-month mark of the trial to determine the program’s status. Initially, the City hopes to reduce its transportation fleet by about 10 vehicles. “We fully expect the PhillyCarShare Program to provide some benefits,” said Mayor Baker. “Much like our innovative RecycleBank Curbside Recycling Program, we are once again bringing an exciting, behavior-changing concept to Delaware.”

Information about PhillyCarShare Program

PhillyCarShare, launched in 2002, is a non-profit organization that operates a rapidly growing fleet of “cars by the hour” from 100+ neighborhood locations (pods) in the greater Philadelphia region. Each member receives a personal key and 24-hour access. Then driving is easy: reserve online, unlock, and go! Members report selling or avoiding the purchase of 8,000 cars; walk, bike, and take transit more; and save an average of \$4,000 annually versus owning cars. PhillyCarShare pioneered free memberships, service to drivers aged 18 to 20, pods every block, debit billing (enabling people of all incomes to join), and child seats in shared vehicles. The City of Philadelphia joined in 2004, becoming the first government worldwide to share cars with local residents in a major fleet reduction effort. The pioneering project has helped replace 330 municipal vehicles, saving taxpayers \$2 million annually.

For more information, visit www.phillycarshare.org.

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