



### **The Green Argument for car sharing**

We all know kiwis like their cars, according to Sustainable Living we have sixty of them for each 100 of the population. Two thirds of our work force drives to work. Should we?

Cityhop, a car sharing modal intended to reduce the need for and reliance on individual car ownership launched this week ( September 27 2007). It is a convenient and eco-friendly way of having access to a car.

Cityhop members (once they have joined up) just go on-line or telephone and reserve a car for a period of time during the day, collect it, drive and then return it to the convenient car park space. Car charges are very economical ( \$12 an hour) when compared with other modes of transport. It encourages public transport use which means fewer car on the road so less congestion, fewer green house gas emissions, less pollutants in our air and water ways, convenience, cost efficiencies and money savings.

Most of us know cars aren't great for the environment. According to a report prepared for the Ministry of the Environment, the transport sector is a very significant source of greenhouse gas emissions, accounting for close to 19 per cent of the total. 88 per cent of these are from road transport. Transport greenhouse gas emissions are dominated by carbon dioxide resulting from fuel combustion. Domestic transport is the largest source of CO 2 emissions.

Every moving car releases about 74 million litres (that nearly 30 Olympic size pools) of polluted air in its lifetime. Studies report that acceptable standards of air emissions are regularly breached in Auckland and the Auckland Regional Council has spent large sums on advertising a 'clean air' campaign. More people are dying as a result of exposure to emissions than in car accidents. more

Among the various emissions cars put out, the most detrimental are: volatile organic compounds (VOCs), nitrogen oxides (NOx), particulate matter (PM), carbon monoxide (CO) and sulphur oxides (SOx). Various Environmental agencies contend that NOx and VOCs result in ground level ozone which not only is a respiratory irritant but a major component of smog.

Says Victoria Carter, the CEO of newly launched car share company, Cityhop, “If the Government and business are serious about reducing greenhouse gas emissions then they have to look at personal transportation use and how they can encourage us into public transport as well as smaller cars!

Ironically, says Carter, a study of new car registrations shows that the average engine size of company fleets is increasing. Smaller vehicle deregistrations were greater than new registrations. So there is still quite a bit of work to do to encourage more sustainable thinking amongst corporate car users!

“Once you make the connection between cars and their relationship to the environment then you start to think more carefully about the need for that trip in the car.”

“Breaking the habit is hard,” Carter acknowledges, “but that’s where Cityhop is a great alternative. We aren’t saying get rid of your car. We’re saying perhaps there is a better way for you to get to work and when you need a car – consider Cityhop to get about.

“We chose Daihatsu Sirions because of their outstanding performance, economy and emissions balance. The Sirion was one of the first cars to have a self-regenerating catalyst that reduces maintenance costs but more importantly is ‘kinder’ to the environment by removing particulates and residual hydrocarbonaceous materials from the engine’s exhaust.

“All cities are working on ways to make them more liveable, to meet the challenges of climate change and to address some of the issues associated with congestion on the roads and increased car use. Auckland is no different.

“In Auckland private cars carry on average 1.2 people which is low compared with, for example, Melbourne where car occupancy is 1.6. more

“A bus carries the same number of people as 40 cars and uses 1/7<sup>th</sup> of the total fuel consumed and takes 6 per cent of the road space.

“According to the Auckland Regional Council another 35 cars go on the road in the Auckland region every day so we have to start thinking differently. 72 per cent of people have access to public transport but for various reasons 31 per cent rarely or never do.

This is where employers can really make the difference. 78 per cent of people travel to work in Auckland in their own car.

Their research also says that of 2000 people questioned on why they didn't use public transport, around 500 said it was because of the lack of 'emergency' transport they might need.

“So imagine if employers gave their employees free public transport and access to a corporate Cityhop membership for those times when they needed a car to go to the Doctor or rush to school to pick up a sick child. Of course for employers to consider this the Government must exempt the Fringe Benefit Tax on public transport subsidy. It makes sense since we all benefit.

“Cityhop is the green alternative to car ownership. It means preservation of green space as fewer car park spaces are required. It puts less strain on urban parking infrastructure. Fewer cars on the road means less congestion, less need for more roads, fewer greenhouse gas emissions and particulates going into our air and waterways.

Zipcar, one of the US car share companies Cityhop has studied estimates that it is responsible for taking 32,000 cars off the road since 2000. In a survey conducted on their own customer base, they've discovered the following:

- 40% of their members decide against purchasing a car, or end up selling their car.
- Car usage of individual members is reduced by as much as 50%.
- Members report a 47% increase in public transportation usage, a 10% increase in bicycle usage and a 26% increase in walking trips.

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“We tend to follow the rest of the world with trends. Car sharing concepts like Cityhop began in Europe, spread to the United States, then the United Kingdom and a few years ago Australia. So if Americans, whom we think of as large car consumers can car share, surely we can start to adapt our thinking.” ends Carter.

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