

# Carsharing: all the benefits of a car, without the downsides

**(6-t)** bureau de recherche

This study was conducted by 6t-bureau de recherche, a mobility-oriented private research firm, in partnership with “France Autopartage” and with the support of the Environmental and Energy Control Agency (ADEME), within the context of the Ministerial Research Program for Innovation in Ground Transportation (PREDIT 4).

  
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## Carsharing: an underexploited potential

French people use their cars less and less. In urban contexts, owning one is becoming **less and less appealing**.

Carsharing is a system that allows the **temporary use of a car without having to deal with the downsides of car ownership**.

Although the system is still at an emerging stage, it has experienced an exponential growth in the past years and it still represents a huge potential for further market development. The “Autolib” initiative in Paris has already enabled carsharing to gain a much stronger visibility in France, and most of the major French cities have now launched similar initiatives that are managed either by private actors or directly by

the public authorities. During the past decade, partly due to the increase in oil price, public action policies aimed at limiting the private use of cars within cities while alternative transportation modes have gained not only visibility and attraction but also market shares. As a consequence, **carsharing is expected to meet a significant development in France from now to 2030**.

In this context, 6t-bureau de recherche teamed up with “France Autopartage” for conducting a **national survey in France in order to better understand the impact of carsharing on urban mobility**.

If you are interested in the full report,  
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## Carsharing gives the opportunity to save money

Carsharing is considered by its users as an “**economical**” (for 46% of them), “**practical**” (45%) and “**ecological**” (35%) transportation mode. It allows them to benefit from the freedom and the flexibility offered by a private car, without having to deal with the various constraints and costs associated with car ownership: purchase, maintenance, parking, etc. In the current context where parking in city centers is becoming more and more expensive and complicated, carsharing programs have reserved parking slots that allow their users to get rid of the main worries associated with parking: the price of a parking lot and the time spent looking for it.

The main reason for switching to carsharing is its **lower cost compared to individual car ownership**. Also, some situations (a move to an urban area, a child's departure, etc.) can make a third, second or even a single car too expensive

for the number of travelled kilometres. Carsharing then appears as a **partial or total solution to replace an individual car**.

With regard to savings, carsharing users save money firstly because **they use a car less often**. The car one decides to sell or one refrains from buying thanks to the use of carsharing is also the car one will not use for trips that can be made by walking, biking or making use of public transport.

Carsharing is considering as economical and practical

## Carsharing significantly reduces the use of private cars

According to data collected in the survey, before using carsharing, respondents used to drive on average **5,246 km per year** by car. After using carsharing, they only drive on average 3,115 km, among which **1,477km** with carsharing. Overall, it shows that the total number of kilometres travelled by car decreases by **41%**. These figures take into account carsharing users that did not own a car before joining the program. If we exclude these specific users, the number of kilometres travelled by car is then halved.

If carsharing users were to drive in a private car the same 1,477 km that they drive using carsharing systems, it would **cost them more**. In fact, carsharing enables its users to avoid the burden of paying the costs linked to car ownership, namely the fixed costs (amortization, insurance, maintenance, etc.) and the operational costs (parking, fuel, etc.).

A cost considerably cheaper than traditional car ownership

5 246

km travelled by car per year before using carsharing

3 115

km travelled by car (both private and shared) per year after joining a carsharing system.

1 638

km travelled by private car per year after joining a carsharing system.

1 477

km travelled with a shared car.

- 41 %

difference in the total distance travelled (in kilometres) by car

- 2 131

km = evolution of the distance travelled by car per year

## Carsharing allows you to leave your car behind

Carsharing is an efficient tool to fight against traffic congestion. According to the survey's findings, **the number of households that do not own a car increases by 40% after joining a carsharing system**. If we look at the reduction in the number of privately owned cars, we find that **each shared vehicle replaces 9 personal cars and frees 8 parking spots**<sup>2</sup>.

As a consequence, carsharing directly contributes to traffic reduction by **decreasing the number of circulating cars**.

It also helps **to reduce traffic congestion indirectly**, by freeing parking spots and by consequently shortening the time spent by drivers searching for an available parking spot in cities. Reducing this time slot is an important issue at the level of a city as vehicles looking for a place to park represent 5% to 10% of the urban traffic. In total, the time spent by the French drivers looking for a parking spot is 70 million hours

a year, accounting for an estimated cost of 600 million euros<sup>3</sup>.

Finally, **the space left available by the cars can be reassigned to other uses**

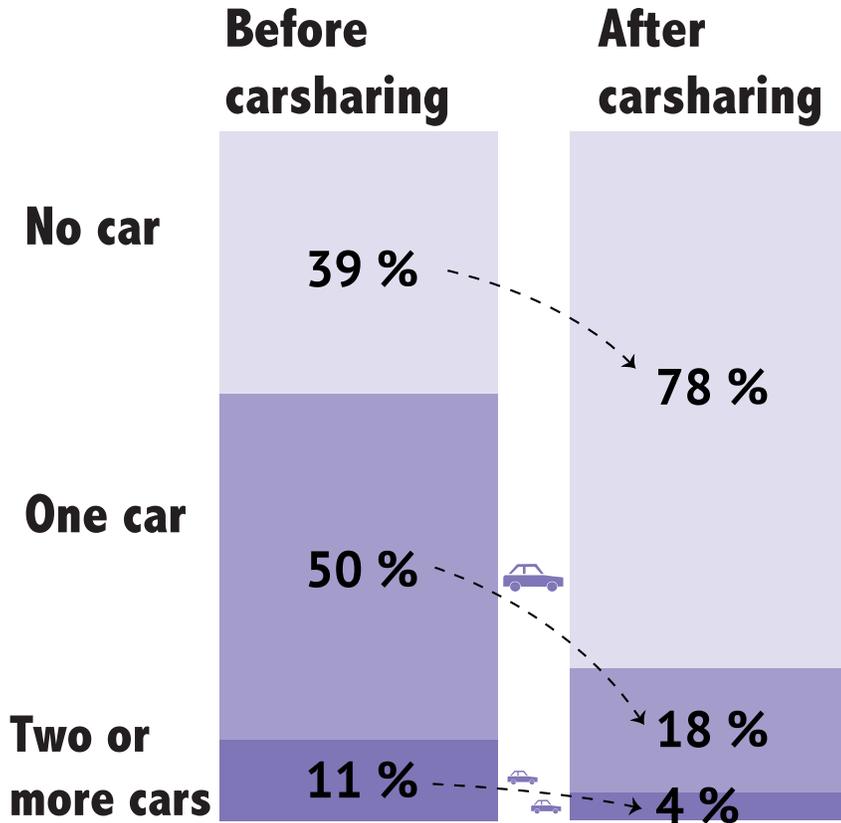
(for example pedestrians or bicycle infrastructures, housing, and shopping areas) and therefore contribute to the building of a more sustainable city.

A shared car replaces 9 personal cars

1. This estimation is based on the ratio of 1 shared vehicle for 20 subscribers (based on the results provided by "France Auto-partage").

2. SARECO, *La recherche d'une place de stationnement : stratégies, nuisances associées, enjeux pour la gestion du stationnement en France*, 2005.

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2012 Results



## Carsharing favours the use of all transportation modes

By freeing its users from owning personal cars, **carsharing encourages the use of other modes.**

After switching to carsharing, users:

- walk more (for 30% of them)
- ride a bicycle more (29%)
- take public transportation more (25%)
- take the train more (24%)
- use carpooling more (12%)

There are also very few carsharing users that use a car or an electric two-wheeler on a daily basis while **most of them make use of public transportation, ride a bike, or walk every day.**

Decreased use of cars

Integrated within a network of transport services, a carsharing system can be, at least partially, financed by the new users it brings to other transportation modes, such as urban public transportation and bikesharing systems.

While some other transportation models only indirectly influence the use of privately owned cars,<sup>3</sup> **carsharing directly targets car drivers and offers them the possibility to adopt modes that they would not have considered otherwise.**

3. A tramway, for instance, only attracts a small number of car drivers (see GAGNIERE V., Les effets du tramway sur la fréquentation du transport public, Revue Géographique de l'Est vol. 52/1-2, 2012). On the other hand, it can contribute to alleviate the traffic on saturated lines and consequently ease their use by people who drove their cars.

### With carsharing...

- 76 %  
respondents travelling by **car** daily 

+ 21 %  
respondents riding **bikes** daily 

- 11 %  
respondents using **motorized two-wheelers** daily 

+ 13 %  
respondents taking **public transportation** daily 

+ 6 %  
respondents **walking** daily 

## Carsharing enables the adherence to ecomobility policies

Carsharing plays a compensating role that is in fact **a lever for the acceptability of policies that limit the use of cars in urban environments** (such as urban tolls, air quality constraints, parking restrictions, etc.).

The survey shows that, nowadays, the main users of carsharing systems are **people who have a preference for cars, but who are constrained to the use of public transportation due to car-restricting policies.**

These users are also **the most satisfied category of users of the carsharing system**, since it allows them to keep using a car even though it is not their private one.

A lever for the acceptability of car restricting policies



Photo credit : France-Autopartage

## MAIN RESULTS:

### ECONOMICAL AND PRACTICAL

Carsharing is more profitable and more practical than using a private car in an urban environment.

### DECREASING CAR USE

Carsharing reduces the ownership and the use of private cars.

### MODAL SHIFT

Carsharing enables the use of sustainable transportation modes by people who would not have used them otherwise.

### ECOMOBILITY POLICIES

Carsharing facilitates the adhesion to ecomobility policies.

## Two current key issues that limit carsharing expansion

### > Carsharing awareness

Awareness of the system directly influences its diffusion: 65% of its users subscribed less than six months after becoming aware of its existence.

The visibility of carsharing stations and vehicles in cities is therefore an important issue, as it was the main way to get aware of carsharing availability for people who subscribed in 2012.

### > Carsharing network development

The second issue that limits carsharing growth is the absence of a national network: 70% of carsharing users would like to be able to use the system in other cities than their home city.

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infos

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