



May 14, 2019

Dear Chair McCormack, Representative Sullivan, and members of the House Transportation Committee,

I am the founder and director of CarShare Vermont in Burlington. Before that, I was involved in the start-up of City CarShare in San Francisco, the nation's first nonprofit carsharing company whose model has been replicated in cities across the U.S. and Canada over the past two decades. Thank you for the opportunity to testify about the importance of supporting ongoing and new investments in public transportation throughout the state, including in shared mobility services and micro-transit. With increased emphasis on promoting electric vehicles through incentive programs and infrastructure, particularly in light of the Volkswagen settlement funds, we feel it is important to reiterate the role of shared mobility as a means for meaningfully reducing the financial and environmental costs of personal transportation, while transitioning our transportation system away from one marked by vehicle-dependence towards one that is more equitable and sustainable.

For the past decade, CarShare Vermont has provided Burlington area residents with a practical and affordable alternative to private vehicle ownership by delivering an efficient carsharing service that achieves a number of goals:

- More than 85% of CarShare Vermont members belong to zero or one vehicle households;
- 65% of members shed or opt not to purchase a vehicle after joining CarShare Vermont;
- For every shared vehicle put in service, 15 privately owned vehicles are removed from the road;
- CarShare Vermont members reduce the amount they drive by an average of 3,500 miles annually for a cumulative reduction of 2 million miles per year;
- CarShare Vermont members reduce their transportation related CO2 emissions by more than 25%; and
- CarShare Vermont provides critical access to vehicles to Vermonters for whom vehicle ownership is financially out of reach.

CarShare Vermont has been a pioneer in the shared mobility industry—we are among the only two carsharing operators to serve a rural community and one of the last remaining community-based nonprofits in the country. Many of our nonprofit peers have been bought up by for-profit competitors who are less focused on mission; the result has left some communities without any carsharing option at all. We would very much like to see the benefits of carsharing beyond the Burlington area. However, our current business model as an independent nonprofit does not allow us to easily replicate. Just as important, we cannot replicate the conditions that make our model work so well in Burlington; it would need to be tailored to fit within the physical and spatial contexts of Vermont's more rural communities, and certainly more subsidy would be required to support it.

To be able to expand carsharing and innovate new models of shared mobility—such as ridesharing, shared ownership among closed networks, and developer or employer-sponsored carsharing, for example, as requested by such communities as Brattleboro, White River Junction, Rutland, Montpelier, and my hometown of Woodstock—the state should broaden its definition of public transportation to allow for and encourage

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innovation, collaboration, and experimentation. Such investments could allow us to leverage both our substantial investment in technology and expertise in the industry to provide technical assistance to other communities seeking to offer their residents carsharing and other forms of public transit, while allowing them the flexibility to shape the models best suited for their needs. By giving communities more transportation choices, we can build a stronger, more integrated transportation system that works for more people and supports a healthier environment.

While promoting the growth of carsharing as a viable alternative to vehicle ownership, we also wish to encourage the state to make carsharing fleets eligible for electric vehicle incentive programs, including nonprofit operators, to facilitate an easier and more affordable path to incorporating EVs into our shared networks. In a place like Burlington where our energy is sourced renewably, we would like to be eligible for incentives that lower the acquisition costs of EVs; we can then pass those savings on to our hundreds of members. In this way, carsharing makes EVs more accessible to a far greater number of people than through ownership.

By making carsharing available to more Vermonters, we can create new opportunities for other forms of public transportation to succeed.

Thank you,

Annie Bourdon  
Executive Director

