

TRANSIT

for Livable Communities



Transit for Livable Communities, 2356 University Avenue W. Suite 403, Saint Paul, MN 55114
Phone: 651-767-0298 E-mail: tlc@tlcminnesota.org Web site: www.tlcminnesota.org

June 4, 2014

Mayor Chris Coleman
Members of the Saint Paul City Council
Saint Paul, Minnesota

Re: Proposed permit with car2go

Dear Mayor Coleman and City Council members:

We are writing to request more time for public review of the proposed permit with car2go and to ask for two modifications to the proposed permit. We see this issue on today's City Council agenda.

Transit for Livable Communities supports increasing the availability and use of transportation options toward the goals of equity, environmental protection, improved public health, and livability. We support having more car sharing vehicles available across the city – especially in areas with lower rates of car ownership and lower household incomes. We are intrigued by the concept of car2go.

Nevertheless, we believe that the proposal from car2go should receive a level of review similar to that of proposed changes in road design, parking, and transit that are regularly considered by the City. Was the proposed permit with car2go reviewed by the City's Transportation Committee?

Initial experience with car2go in Seattle and Portland raise some concerns. A survey of car2go users in Seattle found that users reduced the number of trips they took on public transit. Saint Paul benefits from transit ridership (less traffic, reduced emissions, less need for parking) and when transit ridership declines it can lead to a reduction in transit service frequency – which is already too minimal in Saint Paul.

Mapping of car2go use in Portland, Oregon, found that many car2go members were driving short distances into downtown in the morning and returning to neighborhoods in the evening. Peak-hour driving trips contribute to traffic on arterial streets and in neighborhoods during the most congested times of the day. Cars parked downtown consume the most valuable meter spaces that ideally would be used by people coming to downtown from outside the city where transit service is limited or not available.

After a quick review of the City's proposed permit with car2go, we ask you to:

- Require annual reporting that is at least in keeping with the reporting required of car2go by the City of Seattle. An annual survey of users, including questions about changes in car ownership and changes in trips made on other modes (bicycling, walking, transit, carpooling), should be provided by car2go to the City. The impact of car2go on other modes, including transit, needs to be understood.
- Use this opportunity to consider raising parking meter charges and installing parking meters in more areas of the City. The proposed \$500 per vehicle annual fee (\$1.37 per day) to compensate for lost meter revenue is a very low cost for use of the most valuable parking spaces in the city. TLC believes the City of Saint Paul underprices on-street parking and has too few commercial corridors with parking meters.

We strongly support charging a \$400 per vehicle annual residential permit fee. This fee will help to cover the cost of road and bridge maintenance that residents of Saint Paul pay through property taxes and the state general fund that goes to local roads and bridges.

Have the Grand Avenue, Payne Avenue, University Avenue, Selby Avenue, and other business districts been asked for their input on having car2go vehicles parked for long periods of time on those corridors? Are they concerned about car2go users parking in highly desirable parking spaces that might otherwise be used by shoppers and diners from outside the city?

In closing, we support more travel options in the region, including car sharing, but believe that all proposals, including this one, should have adequate public review. If you approve a permit today, we recommend adding the provisions we suggest.

Sincerely,



Barb J. Thoman, Executive Director
Transit for Livable Communities