

# Changing Car Culture

*Learning from Peg City Car Co-op*



**BIKE. WALK. BUS.  
AND SOMETIMES, DRIVE.**



## Abstract

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Carsharing has recently emerged in Winnipeg as one component in a continuum of sustainable transportation options. Peg City Car Co-op is a community-driven effort established in 2011 after four years of planning, partnership building, and social marketing. Carsharing provides affordable and convenient access to a vehicle without personal ownership. It is based on the premise that biking, walking and taking the bus are low emission ideals but sometimes using a car is the preferred option due to distance, location or activity.

Peg City Car Co-op reflects on their calculated planning process and organizational and personal collaborations that have led to the realization of the co-op. With Osborne Village and South Osborne as starting points, Peg City is also exploring how this model can be adapted to serve lower income neighbourhoods, such as the Daniel MacIntyre / St. Matthews communities.

The case explores how community planners and the public sector can invest in environmentally and socially responsible options while building community leadership, social capital and local ownership.



*Peg City Car Co-op launch event in 2011.*

## Sustainable Winnipeg...

In 2007, Beth McKechnie and Alec Stuart collaborated with Katy Walsh on a Case in Point on the ‘Sustainable Transportation Planning: Community-Based Travel Marketing’ project conducted by Green Action Centre as one of the WinSmart initiatives. Five years later, Winnipeg has a much larger active transportation network, the first leg of its Southwest Rapid Transit Corridor, and a new carshare co-op. This is evidence that reducing car dependence and therefore greenhouse gases while encouraging sustainable transportation options is a long-term priority for many interdisciplinary professionals and community members in Winnipeg. How can planners and

individuals support community-based initiatives and innovation to reduce the impacts of climate change? What combination of policy change, programs, funding and infrastructure will create environments to expand and adapt innovation in other neighbourhoods?

The reality in Winnipeg is that until we plan our communities and our lifestyles to be less car dependent, we will sometimes need a vehicle to get around. With Peg City Car Co-op (Peg City) providing an economic, social and environmentally sustainable alternative, as a member, I look forward to not having to buy a car. Instead, I will bike, walk, bus, and sometimes, drive.

*“Peg City Car Co-op is a forward thinking alternative for mixed-use urban transportation. Member owned, oriented and driven, we provide easy, affordable access to a good quality vehicle when you need one.”*

*Peg City Car Co-op*

# Overview

Carsharing is becoming a more prominent service and planning tool in metropolitan markets, smaller districts and university campuses across North America (Cohen, Shaheen, & McKenzie, 2008). As part of a sustainable transportation plan, carsharing enables a household, business or organization to forgo individual vehicle ownership. Members of carshares have flexible and reliable access to a fleet of vehicles for occasional use, paying only for the time and distance travelled. This service enables households to avoid buying a second car or to go car-free. A 2010 analysis of the impact of carsharing on household vehicle holdings found that each carshare vehicle is estimated to take 9 to 13 vehicles off the road (Martin, Shaheen & Lidicker, 2010).

## *Benefits*

Individual and public benefits of carsharing include reducing car ownership, encouraging residents to walk, cycle and use public transit, (typically) providing cost savings to the individual household, and improving urban land use and development. Carsharing has been shown to lead to fewer vehicle kilometres travelled (i.e. less traffic congestion and fewer transportation-related emissions), fewer parking spaces needed (i.e. less stormwater runoff), and



*Peg City staff member Aaron Russin at the South Osborne parking spot.*

decreased dependence on fossil fuels among other benefits.

## *A Bright Future*

As of July 2011, there were 20 carshare organizations in Canada, with 78,840 members and 2,605 vehicles (Innovative Mobility, 2012). Compared to personal vehicle ownership, carsharing is a small piece of the pie, but it is growing. Carsharing membership grew 117% in North America from 2007 to 2009 with similar growth expected to continue over the next 5-10 years (Zhao, 2010).

With much consideration and community participation through a feasibility study, the group that would become Peg City Car Co-op determined that carsharing was a viable option for Winnipeg, specifically Osborne Village, and that using a co-operative organizational model would support a successful business (Peg City Car Co-op, 2010). Between June 2011 and mid-May 2012, 91 people and two organizations signed up to share three cars, two in Osborne Village and one in South Osborne.

*“Carsharing is defined by its environmental and social purpose, rather than business and financial objectives.”*

*CarSharing Association, 2011*



## Carsharing in Winnipeg

A very calculated four-year grassroots planning process occurred before Peg City Car Co-op was ready to emerge. The due diligence of a literature review, lessons learned from key person interviews, a feasibility study, an online survey, two community meetings, and participation at other organization's community meetings has led to the early success of Peg City. The long-term social, environmental and business success is still to be determined but a strong foundation has been built.

Peg City learned from the experience of a range of carshares, from those in major metropolitan cities to smaller urban centres as well as other winter cities, such as Chicago, Minneapolis and Ottawa.

### *Local Investment*

The political context in Manitoba supports democratic cooperative organizations with more than 400 co-ops contributing to the local economy (Province of Manitoba, 2012). Cooperative success is based on principles of voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, member participation, autonomy, independence, education and training, co-operation among cooperatives and concern for the community (Peg City Car Co-op, 2012).

Through the Manitoba Community Enterprise Development Tax Credit program, Peg City has been approved to sell investment shares and provide a 30% personal income tax credit to individuals who choose to financially support the car co-op (Province of Manitoba, n.d.). This helps keep investments in communities in addition to providing a quality service. Both Assiniboine Credit Union and The Jubilee Fund, with their history of supporting cooperative, socially responsible endeavours, have demonstrated faith in Peg City as financial partners.

### *Considerations*

Peg City assessed the following factors to see if carsharing was feasible for Winnipeg: location, demographics, institutional or community buy-in, financial

support, links to broader transportation plans, and potential challenges related to developing a market.

Based on factors for success derived from the literature, Peg City looked at neighbourhood criteria to determine where carsharing would be best suited. Significant factors included: density, diversity of land uses within a walkable neighbourhood, high proportion of 1-2 person households with low levels of vehicle ownership, existing use and access to sustainable transportation, interest in the service from residents, education level and household income, and proportion of 25-39 year olds and non-family households (Berry, Dykman, Elko, Lindsay & McKechnie, 2009). Of the neighbourhoods evaluated, Broadway-Assiniboine and McMillan/Roslyn (Osborne Village) were best suited for carsharing (Berry et al. 2009).

One of Peg City's goals is to provide affordable vehicle access, where possible, to lower income neighbourhoods. To this end they have received funding from Neighbourhoods Alive! to explore with Daniel McIntyre /St. Matthews Community Association how the carsharing model can be adapted for these neighbourhoods.

# Lessons Learned

## Network Synergy

Building community partnerships and interdisciplinary peer-to-peer learning networks build leadership skills and social capital. This occurred at the board member level through other carsharing organizations (particularly Modo The Car Co-op in Vancouver and Community CarShare in the Waterloo Region) as well as relationship-building in the public, private and non-profit sectors. Target partners include: transportation (municipal transit, parking and fleet management authorities and NGOs such as Green Action

Centre and Bike to the Future), planning and development, local business, sustainability, arts and neighbourhood-related interests. This diverse network is helping to leverage relationships, funding and resources. Carsharing is of interest to and supportive of many constituent and special interest groups rather than being in competition with them. Without the participation of committed citizens-turned-board members with diverse practical experience and educational backgrounds (e.g. business, city planning, environmental science,

active transportation), it is hard to say if this dream would have become a reality.

Peg City Car Co-op also leaned heavily on Manitoba and Canada's robust cooperative community for guidance and support (e.g. the Federation of Canadian Carsharing Co-operatives, Manitoba Cooperative Association, Manitoba Cooperative Development Services, and Co-operative Development Initiative among others).



David Pensato's Network Model for Peg City Car Co-op

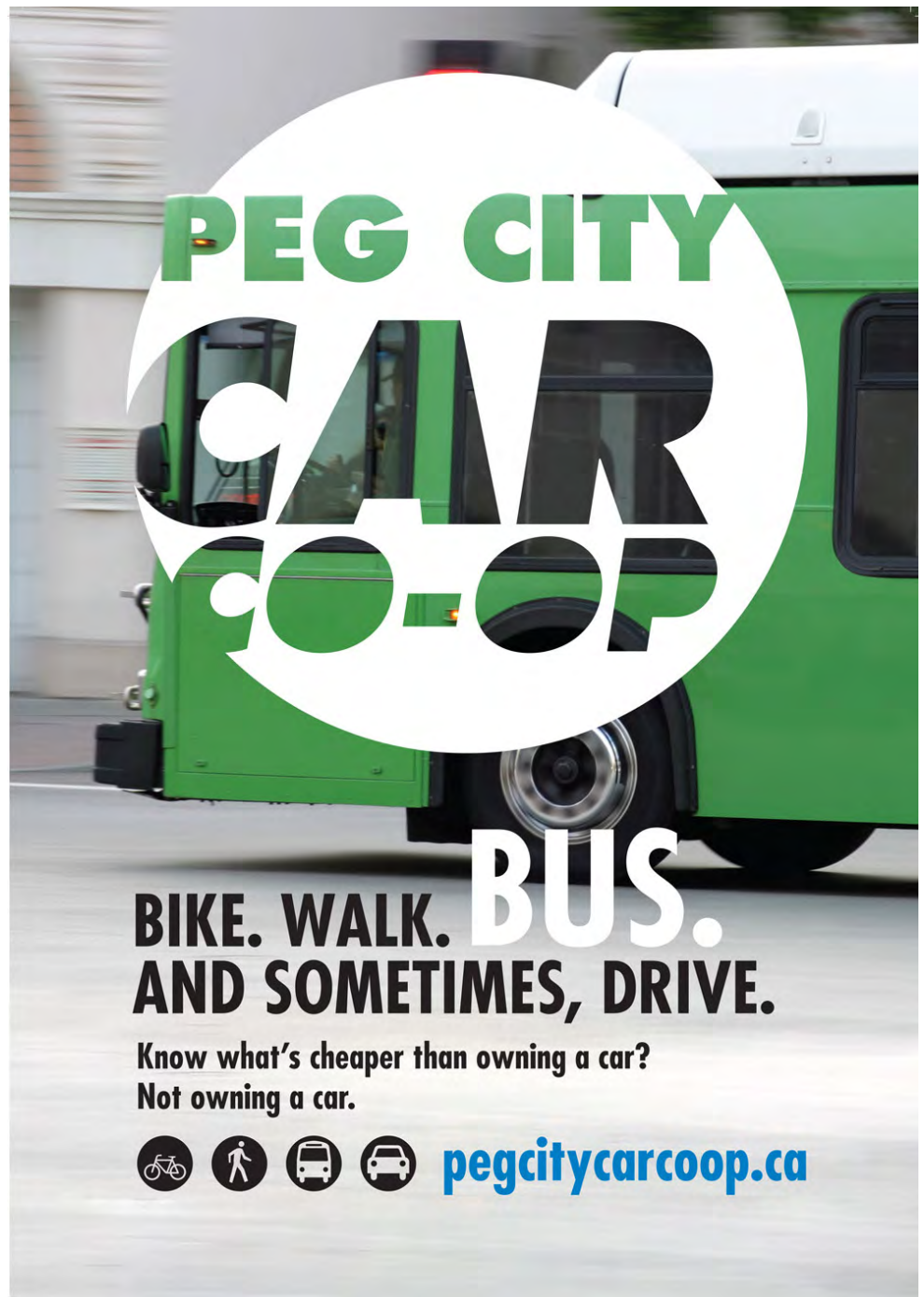
A 2012 report of the public sector in the United Kingdom found that car clubs (i.e. carsharing) provide four times the social benefit, appeal to a wider spectrum of income levels and remove more cars from use (i.e. remove more carbon from the environment) than electric vehicles (Moore, Rodriguez, Tokuhiko & Wang, 2012). Linking electric vehicles in carsharing organizations can provide a positive social investment that significantly reduces negative impacts (Moore et al. 2012). This alludes to investing in existing resources and connecting people and services rather than creating new infrastructure.

*“Peg City Car Co-op really jumped into the market with some creative approaches, like their video series and use of social media.”*

*Jason Hammond,  
President National Federation and Community CarShare*

### *Social Marketing*

A brand strategy was identified as an important component in framing the message and developing a market for carsharing in Winnipeg. David Pensato ([davidpensato.com](http://davidpensato.com)) worked with Peg City to create an interactive brand strategy that builds an evolving relationship and collaboration between the speaker and the audience to influence multi-modal urban traveller networks (Pensato, 2011). A few examples of the methods used by Peg City include member testimonial videos, random surprise small gifts in the cars for members, local music CDs in the vehicles, geo-marketing around the vehicles (such as the transit shelter ads), and heavy use of social media (blogs, Facebook, Twitter). Using a neighbourhood-based strategy requires an understanding of existing and future community relationships. Peg City has built relationships with local organizations such as the Gas Station Village Farmer’s Market, Manitoba Film & Music, Winnipeg U-Drive, Canada Safeway, CAA Manitoba, and the Winnipeg Social Purchasing Portal in order to share information and access services for the co-op.



*Peg City's transit shelter marketing in Osborne Village.*

# What Can Planners Do?

Planning and policy can enable or hinder the progress of community-based initiatives such as Peg City. To alleviate some of the risks associated with carshare start-ups, planners and the public sector can create supportive conditions for mutual benefit. This can be accomplished by becoming a visible advocate and partner in carsharing to instill member confidence, legitimacy and awareness (Cohen et al. 2008).

## *Planning Precedents*

The City of Vancouver has taken significant steps to support carsharing. In 2009, the City became customers of Modo The Car Co-op with cars located at City Hall. This reduced the number of vehicles required in the City-owned fleet and increased growth of the local car co-op (City of Vancouver, 2012). Carsharing can be encouraged in development projects through zoning and planning policy. Under the City of Vancouver Green Building Strategy and Section 3.2.2 of the parking by-law, 5 parking spots can be eliminated for every carshare vehicle and associated parking spot provided

(City of Vancouver, 2010). For eligible downtown developments up to 6 carshare parking spots for every 100 dwelling units and outside the downtown area up to 2 spots per 100 dwelling units (City of Vancouver, 2010). The City also encourages carsharing by providing on- and off-street parking stalls or permits (City of Vancouver, 2012).

The City of Mississauga has signed a two-year agreement with AutoShare for a car-share service pilot project (Autoshare, [www.autoshare.com/mississauga.html](http://www.autoshare.com/mississauga.html)). Governments can also incentivize carsharing through grant and loan applications, requests for proposals and tax policy (Cohen et al. 2008). LEED Canada provides 1-3 green building points when new construction designates parking for carshare services (Modo The Car Co-op, 2011).

The City of Winnipeg's Complete Communities Direction Strategy encourages planners and policy makers to "Work with partners to incorporate transportation demand management approaches, such as car sharing and bike

parking into new developments." (City of Winnipeg, 2011). Many of the neighbourhood criteria such as density and mixed use that are ideal for carsharing exist in the guidelines set out in Complete Communities. What are next steps to put these recommendations into action?

For future expansion of carsharing in Manitoba, with Peg City's launch as the pilot project, it will be important to compare both individual and societal quantitative (e.g. actual cost and benefits, emissions) and qualitative information (e.g. changing behaviour and attitudes, member experiences, building relationships, organizational capacity and credibility).

The community-driven process to launch a carshare in Winnipeg took several years but continues to be a rewarding experience for all involved. Peg City Car Co-op's future success will be defined by its collaborative and hands on approach, providing a valuable community service and working toward sustainable policy, planning and partnerships.

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## Images

- page 1: Dave on Sharing: Peg City Car Co-op. <http://vimeo.com/34036808>
- page 2: Peg City Car Co-op.
- page 3: Simon Fuller, Canstar Community News. [www.winnipegfreepress.com/our-communities/souwester/139310583.html](http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/our-communities/souwester/139310583.html)
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- page 5: David Pensato: Interactive Brand + Strategy. [davidpensato.com](http://davidpensato.com)
- page 6: Peg City Car Co-op.