



FIRST STUDY ON CAR-SHARING IN QUÉBEC

CO₂ emissions reduced by 168 000 tons per year thanks to car-sharing

Communauto, Équiterre and the Conseil régional de l'environnement de Montréal call for commitments by the candidates in the upcoming elections

MONTREAL, FEBRUARY 19, 2007 – CO₂ emissions reduced by 168 000 tons per year in Quebec thanks to car-sharing: that is the potential assessed by the first Québécois study on this service which was made public today by the Conseil régional de l'environnement de Montréal (CRE-Montréal), Équiterre and Communauto. At present, 13 000 tons of CO₂ emissions are already avoided by the 11 000 users of the car-sharing service in Quebec.

The study, carried out by the engineering firm Tecsub within the framework of a recent evaluation of combined mobility initiatives in Canadian cities called "Projet auto + bus", evaluated, for the first time, the current and potential impact of car-sharing on the environment in Quebec. Under the current conditions, Tecsub assesses the potential of the car-sharing market to 139 000 households. Considering that among those who subscribe to car-sharing, some increase their use of a vehicle while others reduce it, each user reduces the distances he travels by car by 2 900 km per year on average. Moreover, users of car-sharing use less polluting vehicles compared to the general population. By combining these two factors, we obtain a net reduction in CO₂ emissions of approximately 1.2 tons per person per year.

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"If car-sharing's market potential, as estimated by Tecsub, was attained, this service alone would lead to a reduction of CO₂ emissions equivalent to 5.6 times the reduction targeted for alternative modes of transportation by the 2006-2012 Action Plan – Quebec and climate change, all without any costs for the taxpayer.

Furthermore, 77 % of car-sharing members in Quebec claim to have gotten rid of a vehicle or decided against purchasing one as a result of joining this service. Thus, car-sharing can have quite a structuring effect on the evolution of mobility. It would therefore be logical to support its development", says Mr Benoît Robert, CEO of Communauto.

Car-sharing users in Quebec are, on average, 40 years old, have a very high level of education and relatively high incomes. Although they do not have a personal car (90 % of the users' households), they do not feel limited in their mobility, since they use vehicles available in a "self-serve" fashion when necessary. Car-sharing users thus remain faithful to public transport, cycling and walking to meet their mobility needs.

Car-sharing: a requisition in the next elections

Strengthened by the revelations of this study and by their expertise in the field of sustainable transportation, the Conseil régional de l'environnement de Montréal, Équiterre and Communauto are calling for a commitment by the political parties in the next elections to include car-sharing in their program, specifically:

Firstly, by recognizing car-sharing as a public service, either by introducing it in the Québec "Green Plan" or in legislation as the French Senate did on May 11, 2006 (see <http://www.senat.fr/leg/tas05-089.html>);

Secondly, by modifying the laws and regulations which currently hinder car-sharing members or decrease the attractiveness of the service (the impossibility for a user to dispute a traffic violation because he is not the owner of the vehicle, extended impounding of a shared vehicle in case of irregularity of a single user's driving licence, taxation of the car-sharing portion of transportation fares combining car-sharing and public transport, etc.);

Thirdly, by inviting the municipalities to adapt their rules to the car-sharing reality, more specifically by :

- Allowing car-sharing users to use parking spaces reserved for residents with parking permits;
- Adapting restrictions specific to on-street parking to allow for a greater availability of shared vehicles in the heart of residential neighbourhoods, following the example of the Plateau-Mont-Royal and Outremont boroughs;
- Enticing the various ministries or public organizations (hospitals, CLSCs, CHSLDs, schools, etc.) to volunteer parking spaces for shared cars;

Fourthly, by adopting measures which would provide rewards to individuals who choose car-sharing over owning a personal vehicle, such as tax privileges for car-sharing users and/or a bonus in exchange for handing over a license plate (as is the case in the Brussels Region).

"Car-sharing is a component of the *transportation Cocktail* which consists in combining various modes of transportation in order to induce more ecological, economical and healthy trips made just as effectively as with the lone car. The present study proves that because it constitutes an alternative to owning a car, car-sharing supports the other modes of transportation and contributes to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. The current and future governments will have to consider it in their actions related to the environment and sustainable transport and facilitate the establishment of car-sharing services in Quebec", explains Anny Létourneau, sustainable Transportation program Coordinator at Équiterre.

"The municipalities' support is crucial for the development of car-sharing. The next action plans of *Montreal first strategic plan for sustainable development* and the Montreal Transportation Plan must include this service in their objectives by undertaking concrete actions", declares Mr Robert Perreault, director of the Conseil régional de l'environnement de Montréal.

— 30 —

For further information:

Marco Viviani

*Development and public relations
executive*

Communauto

514 499-8099 ext. 130

mviviani@communauto.ca

www.communauto.com

Élisabeth Caron

Communications Agent

Conseil régional de l'environnement
de Montréal

514 842-2890 ext. 226

ecaron@cremtl.qc.ca

www.cremtl.qc.ca

Anny Létourneau

*Ecological Transport program
Coordinator*

Equiterre

514 522-2000 ext. 239

aletourneau@equiterre.qc.ca

www.equiterre.qc.ca