

A1

## VEHICLE-SHARING PARKING FACILITIES Proposed Zoning Language

### 1. In Article 2.000 Insert the Appropriate Definitions

Amend Article 2.000 by inserting a new definition *Parking facility, Vehicle-sharing and Vehicle-Sharing Service* in the appropriate alphabetical location, to read as follows:

***Parking Facility, Vehicle-Sharing.*** A portion of a building or lot that contains one or more off-street motor vehicle self-service parking spaces and access thereto including driveways or other publicly accessible ways, that serves as the location of the actively in-service vehicles used by a Vehicle-Sharing Service. The Vehicle-Sharing Parking Facility may be a garage, an area of a lot or all or a portion of a parking lot. A Vehicle-Sharing Parking Facility may be a part of an accessory or a principal use Parking Facility serving other uses. The Vehicle Use Parking Facility may be a principal use exclusively. Such a facility shall not accommodate or include any administrative offices, repair facilities, vehicle storage or any other management, administrative, or maintenance aspect of a Vehicle-Sharing Service. Such a facility shall be subject to the dimensional and other requirements of accessory and principal use parking facilities as set forth in Article 6.000 unless otherwise provided in Section 11.20 of this Ordinance.

***Vehicle-Sharing Service.*** A Vehicle-Sharing Service shall mean a membership based company, organization or enterprise that provides hourly, daily or similar short-term rental of private passenger motor vehicles intended for use by paying members, by reservation. A Vehicle-Sharing Service shall provide insurance for its members when using the vehicles and shall assume responsibility for maintenance of the vehicles and the Vehicle-Sharing Parking Facility.

***Vehicle-Sharing Service Vehicle.*** A private passenger motor vehicle, small truck routinely used for private passenger transportation (2.5 tons or less), and passenger van (2.5 tons or less). It shall not include cargo vans, large trucks customarily used for commercial purposes, taxis, passenger vehicles used to transport passengers for a fee, or detachable trailers.

### 2. Insert a New *Vehicle-Sharing Parking Facility* Use in Table of Use Regulations

Amend Article 4.000, Section 4.32 – Transportation, Communication and Utility Uses, by inserting a new line “i” with a companion footnote “56” to read as follows:

#### 4.32 Transportation, Communication & Utility Uses

- a. Bus or railroad passenger station

A<sub>2</sub>

- b. Automobile parking lot or parking garage for private passenger cars
- c. Railroad freight terminal, railroad yard and shops
- d. Truck or bus terminal, yard or building for storage or servicing of trucks, trailers or buses, parking lot for trucks
- e. Radio and Television transmission station, including towers
- f. Radio and television studio
- g. Utilities
  - 1. Telephone exchange (including switching, relay and transmission facilities serving mobile communications systems) and any towers or antennas accessory thereto
  - 2. Transformer station, substation, gas regulator station, or pumping station
  - 3. Power Plant for the non-nuclear production, generation, and distribution of electricity or steam.
- h. Helipad or Airport
- i. **Vehicle-Sharing Parking Facility**

56

Yes (for all zoning district columns except the Open Space column where it is No)

**3. Insert a new Footnote 56**

---

**Amend Article 4.000, Section 4.40 – Footnotes to the Table of Use Regulations, by inserting a new Footnote 56 to read as follows:**

56. Subject to the provisions of Section 11.20

**4. Create a new Section 11.20 – Vehicle Sharing Service Parking Facilities**

---

**Amend Article 11.000 – Special Regulations by inserting a new Section 11.20 to read as follows:**

**11.20 Vehicle-Sharing Parking Facility**

11.21 *Statement of Purpose.* This Section 11.20 is intended to facilitate the provision of motor vehicles conveniently located throughout the city that are shared by multiple individuals through a membership based Vehicle-Sharing Service (VSS) available to the

general public for hourly or similar short term rental. It is anticipated that by providing such vehicles to residents, visitors, and employees of businesses in the city the City can advance its environmental goals by (a) reducing the need for individuals and businesses to own, park and store privately owned vehicles, (b) encouraging people to commute less by single-occupancy motor vehicles in the city, and (c) by reducing the need for families to have more than one motor vehicle, or perhaps any motor vehicle at all.

11.22 *Applicability.* A Vehicle-Sharing Parking Facility shall be permitted in all zoning districts and shall be regulated as set forth below.

11.23 *Permitted Vehicle-Sharing Parking Facilities*

11.23.1 *Permitted As-of-right.* A Vehicle-Sharing Parking Facility meeting the following conditions and limitations shall be permitted as-of-right. Where a limitation on the total number of parking spaces in a Vehicle-Sharing Parking Facility is established by these regulations, that limitation shall be the combined total number of spaces located on the lot by all Vehicle-Sharing Services operating thereon.

1. The Facility (including any individual parking space) is lawfully established and conforming to the dimensional and other requirements of Article 6.000 and any other applicable regulations unless otherwise provided in this Section 11.20, or, if not, is lawfully non-conforming.

2. Parking spaces constituting the Vehicle-Sharing Parking Facility shall be subject to the following limitations unless otherwise permitted in Section 11.23.2 below:

a. In residential zoning districts, the number of VSS parking spaces on a lot shall not exceed 10% (rounded up to the next whole number), of the authorized accessory parking spaces on the lot, or one space, whichever is greater. The VSS spaces may be in addition to spaces serving other uses or may replace those spaces [Example: A lot having 1 to 10 existing parking spaces may have one VSS parking space; a lot having 11 to 20 existing spaces may have two VSS parking spaces, etc.].

b. In any zoning district, the number of VSS parking spaces shall not be limited in commercial parking facilities (i.e. a facility registered with the Department of Traffic, Parking and Transportation as a Commercial Facility per the provisions of Chapter 10.16 of the Cambridge Municipal Code) or principal use parking facilities established under the provisions of Section 4.32 (b) [Automobile Parking Lot for Private Passenger Cars] of the Zoning Ordinance.

c. For Accessory Parking Facilities in non-residential districts no more than 10% of the required accessory parking spaces may be replaced with VSS spaces.

A4

d. For purposes of conformance to the accessory parking requirements of Article 6.000, any replaced parking space(s) shall continue to be considered accessory to the use to which it is tied.

3. No sales or vehicle servicing [such as oil changes] or administrative or similar functions or personnel shall be located at the site unless otherwise permitted by the use regulations in the applicable zoning district. Minor, unobtrusive, routine maintenance shall be permitted.

4. Vehicles using the Vehicle-Sharing Parking Facility shall be accessed directly by the customer (member) without any assistance or supervision by company personnel.

5. *Permitted Signs.* The following signs only shall be permitted in residential zoning districts and in non-residential districts in addition to those signs otherwise permitted..

a. Identification of Vehicle-Sharing Parking Facility spaces shall be limited to one non-illuminated wall, projecting or freestanding sign per space carrying the name of the company and other necessary information (e.g. contact and emergency phone numbers, etc). No sign may exceed one and one half (1.5) square foot in area (notwithstanding any other limitation or restriction in Article 7.000 of the Zoning Ordinance),

b. Up to three signs may be displayed on each vehicle, identifying the name and/or logo and contact information of the company. No sign may exceed two (2) square foot in area.

8. The vehicles shall be in active use by customers (members) of the VSS and shall not be stored for other purposes or for use at other locations. All vehicles shall be currently registered with the Massachusetts Department of Motor Vehicles, principally garaged in the City of Cambridge, and displaying a valid Cambridge Resident Parking Permit.

9. All owners of that portion of a lot accommodating a Vehicle-Sharing Parking Facility, or their legally authorized representative (including the condominium association), shall be required to grant permission for the operation of such a facility on their property.

11.23.2 *Permitted By Special Permit.* A Vehicle-Sharing Parking Facility not otherwise permitted in Section 11.23.1 above shall be permitted by special permit from the Planning Board. The Board may specifically (a) allow more principal use VSS parking spaces on a lot than are allowed in Section 11.23.1 or (b) may allow additional required accessory parking spaces for non-residential uses (including hotels and motels) to be replaced by VSS parking spaces in a Vehicle-Sharing

Parking Facility or (c) may allow a principal use Vehicle-Sharing Parking Facility on a lot.

In granting a special permit the Planning Board shall consider the following:

1. The extent to which the Facility, in its design, quantity of vehicles, distribution of vehicles on the lot, extent of pavement on the lot, the extent of landscaping and Open Space on the lot, and other features, is consistent with the residential pattern of development around it when such a facility is in a residential zoning district and consistent with the pattern of motor vehicle use and storage in the surrounding neighborhood.
2. The traffic generated by the Facility is appropriate to its location and the surrounding uses impacted by it, similar to the traffic that would be generated by accessory parking facilities, and does not result in activity on the lot that would significantly negatively impact uses surrounding it in ways that customary accessory parking would not do.
3. Where it is proposed to substitute Facility parking spaces for existing required accessory parking spaces, a demonstration, through on-street utilization surveys among other techniques where appropriate, that previous on-site parking demand will not be shifted to parking spaces on adjacent public streets to the detriment of the neighborhood as a whole.

The Planning Board may impose appropriate conditions in issuing a special permit to ensure that the operation of a Facility, particularly in residential neighborhood, does not create a nuisance or derogate from the intent of the zoning regulations to ensure a peaceful and quiet residential environment in a neighborhood.

# Zipcar parking proposal to impact neighborhood

The City Council is considering changing the zoning laws to make it easier for vehicle-sharing companies like Zipcar to use parking spaces currently reserved for residential and other use.

Apparently Zipcar has been having trouble finding parking spots for rent. The spaces are used as drop-off and pickup points for customers sharing the cars. But under current zoning, commercial organizations are not allowed to rent residential parking spots.

To remedy this, the Council has proposed changing the zoning laws to allow vehicle-share parking in up to 10% of all residential spaces and unlimited spaces in public parking facilities. (For a complete copy of the legal notice and proposed language, please go to the [www.mcna.org](http://www.mcna.org) home page and look for the link to the ordinance amendment.)

Since there is currently only one company that offers a vehicle-share program, the sole beneficiary of the proposed amendments would be Zipcar, a for-profit alternative car rental company.

### Public Meetings

This proposal will be open to public discussion at two upcoming meetings:

□ The City Council Ordinance Committee will hold a hearing on Thursday, May 7 at 5 p.m. in the Sullivan Chamber, Second Floor of City Hall, 795 Mass Ave., on proposed changes to the zoning laws to allow Zipcar to rent parking spots in residential neighborhoods.

□ The Planning Board has scheduled a public hearing for Tuesday, May 19, at 7:30 p.m. at the Second Floor Meeting Room at City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway, to review the zoning petition.

Zipcar has positioned itself as the environmentally friendly alternative to car ownership. However, part of the discussion is more fundamental and has nothing to do with the environment, but rather with the simple question: Should this activity be allowed in residential neighborhoods versus allowing the activity in commercial or municipal areas?

One point of view suggests that commercial use of residential parking spaces in a neighborhood is simply not compatible. Renters will be coming and going at all times of day and night. Evidence from the Irving Street Zipcar lot suggests that trash and upkeep of the space can be an issue and needs to be factored into the neighborhood view. Otherwise, well-maintained residential lots may become less so. Another consideration for residential use is liability issues: if a Zipcar renter trips and falls on your property, who is ultimately liable?

### \$225 a month for parking?

Lastly, and more problematic, is the economic issue that pits resident parking rates against Zipcar rates.

.....  
Zipcar has positioned itself as the environmentally friendly alternative to car ownership. But permitting a commercial operation to operate in a residential area has economic repercussions for neighborhood residents.  
.....

Zipcar has been known to offer to pay higher rates than most residential rates. "Last year I was told that Zipcar would pay over \$225 per space and that the parking rates in my residential lot were increasing to that level," reports MCNA president Joan Pickett. "At the time I was paying \$130 per month. We were able to push back the rent increase by letting the landlord know that it would be illegal to run a commercial operation in a residential area."

So, how does this mix of commercial and residential use affect the economics of parking in M-C? An unintended consequence of the proposed amendments would be to push some residential renters back onto the neighborhood's already-overcrowded streets as spaces are lost to Zipcar.

On the other hand, Zipcars may be an excellent environmental alternative to car ownership, so why not let them have access to the commercial and municipal lots without potentially changing the dynamics of an already difficult residential parking situation? We need a healthy debate, and encourage M-C residents pro and con to offer their opinions to the City Council and to the Planning Board at their upcoming meetings.

## M-C artists open their doors at Cambridge Open Studios event

There will an Open Studios in Mid-Cambridge from noon to 6 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, May 9 and 10. It is the first time the Mid-Cambridge neighborhood will be participating in the event.

Meet hundreds of artists and discover unique paintings, jewelry, fiber arts, ceramics, film, mixed-media, literary works, and more. Much of the artwork is available for purchase. For a complete list of participating artists and their addresses, go to [http://www.cambridgeartscouncil.org/COS09\\_artists.pdf](http://www.cambridgeartscouncil.org/COS09_artists.pdf)

Open Studios: Central is part of the first city-wide Cambridge Open Studios (COS) during three weekends in April and May. COS is a collaboration of the Cambridge Arts Council, Cambridgeport Artists Open Studios, North Cambridge All Arts Open Studios and artists and arts organizations throughout the city to enable significant interaction between the local arts community, residents and visitors to Cambridge. For more information, contact [cos@cambridgema.gov](mailto:cos@cambridgema.gov) or 617-349-4385.