CAR-SHARING: A SOLUTION FOR FLEET MANAGEMENT
By Lee Broughton, Corporate Sustainability, Enterprise Holdings

Providing sustainable transportation and mobility solutions has been at the core of our company’s mission for more than 55 years. With this mind, Enterprise Holdings—which owns and operates our Enterprise brand as well as the National Car Rental and Alamo Rent A Car brands—has helped advance a new tool for companies looking to enhance fleet management operations and sustainability initiatives: car sharing.

In 2005, the Enterprise brand introduced hourly car rentals in large urban centers as a natural extension of our business rental program. Then, in 2007, we launched our membership-based program WeCar by Enterprise B2B to embrace and help speed the adoption of car-sharing technology, and the program has now expanded to more than 25 states. Our experience suggests that car sharing can offer what many businesses, universities, government offices, military bases, and other facilities are seeking: a more nimble, accessible, and energy-efficient vehicle that can quickly respond to seasonal, geographic, and daily fleet demands. This, in turn, helps ensure drivers find WeCar vehicles when and where they are needed, while advanced telematics simultaneously help boost vehicle utilization and reduce costs.

The growth of nonprofit and for-profit car-sharing services—at transportation hubs, corporate parks, college campuses, and other high-density locations—is highlighted elsewhere in this report. And while car-sharing’s novelty, convenience, and cost-efficiency have been well documented, there is another major reason for its growth and popularity. Local car-sharing fleets, just like local car-rental fleets, can be used as Petri dishes to introduce innovative equipment and alternative-fuel vehicles, gradually socializing new technology where people live and work. We’ve offered hybrids for years in both corporate and retail programs, and we’re currently offering electric vehicles in many WeCar programs. These fleet enhancements are allowing some partners to dramatically reduce the carbon footprint of their fleets.

To that end, we consider car sharing to be part of the ongoing local mobility evolution and another step toward more efficient, sustainable transportation solutions. Given such attributes, it’s not surprising that car sharing sometimes can be used to reduce corporate fleet overhead. Many of our clients have leveraged car-sharing technology to reduce their traditional fleets by 30 percent or more—and they are able to start allocating these expenses on a broader basis since vehicles no longer are assigned only to certain employees or departments full time.

There’s an added bonus: WeCar supplements and facilitates our Rideshare vanpooling program. Rideshare serves both individual commuter groups and large employer work sites, with the average van freeing up nine parking spaces and eliminating 12,500 pounds of carbon dioxide a month. WeCar and Rideshare also help reduce traffic congestion and fuel consumption and, in the process, support long-term sustainability initiatives.

As a result, innovative fleet management now includes car sharing—along with car rental, car leasing, and vanpool programs—particularly as businesses incorporate their sustainability goals into their comprehensive, long-term local transportation planning.