Car-Sharing Comes to Pleasanton

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By Ron McNicoll

City CarShare, Toyota and Hacienda Business Park are combining to provide employees with a fleet of 15 electric vehicles that can be rented on an hourly basis.

The project is expected to start by the end of July, and is scheduled to last for three years. The results will be studied by UC Berkeley for its impact as an environmentally sustainable program, said James Paxson, general manager of the Hacienda Park Owners Association.

If the 15 cars are booked frequently, more can be added later, which could bring the total as high as 30 cars, said Mike Harrington, City CarShare's electric vehicle program manager. There are also plans to locate a pod at the East Dublin/Pleasanton BART station.

All cars would be booked in advance through CityCarShare via phone, computer web page, or smart phone app. Renters must be members of CityCarShare, which is an 11-year-old non-profit organization based in San Francisco.

Paxson said that the cars also will be convenient for the 4000 residents who live in Hacienda Park. However, any CityCarShare member can rent one, so the option is open to Pleasanton residents outside Hacienda.

The fleet will be ideal for employees who commute to Hacienda on BART, and need a car for only a couple of hours to attend a business-related meeting or luncheon, said Paxson.

The cars will be based in "pods" in parking lots equipped with electrical chargers.

Harrigan said that Toyota looks at the new fleet as an experiment for its electrical vehicles in a car-share situation. City CarShare and Hacienda like the program because it encourages more people to get out of their cars, leading to a cleaner environment.

Harrigan said that a study showed that for every car-share vehicle put into use, between 10 and 15 cars are taken out of service.

The vehicles are ready to go into service. However, arrangements still must be made with various businesses to establish pod locations.

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