

The Proposal of a Shared Mobility City Index to Support Investment Decision Making for Carsharing

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Abstract : One of the biggest challenges entering a market with a carsharing or any other shared mobility (SM) service is sound investment decision-making. To support this process, the authors think that a city index evaluating different criteria is necessary. The goal of such an index is to benchmark cities along a set of external measures to answer the main two challenges: financial viability and the understanding of its specific requirements. The authors have consulted several shared mobility projects and industry experts to create such a Shared Mobility City Index (SMCI). The current proposal of the SMCI consists of 11 individual index measures: general data (demographics, geography, climate and city culture), shared mobility landscape (current SM providers, public transit options, commuting patterns and driving culture) and political vision and goals (vision of the Mayor, sustainability plan, bylaws/tenders supporting SM). To evaluate the suitability of the index, 16 cities on the East Coast of North America were selected and secondary research was conducted. The main sources of this study were census data, organisational records, independent press releases and informational websites. Only non-academic sources were used because the relevant data for the chosen cities is not published in academia. Applying the index measures to the selected cities resulted in three major findings. Firstly, density (city area divided by number of inhabitants) is not an indicator for the number of SM services offered: the city with the lowest density has five bike and carsharing options. Secondly, there is a direct correlation between commuting patterns and how many shared mobility services are offered. New York, Toronto and Washington DC have the highest public transit ridership and the most shared mobility providers. Lastly, except one, all surveyed cities support shared mobility with their sustainability plan. The current version of the shared mobility index is proving a practical tool to evaluate cities, and to understand functional, political, social and environmental considerations. More cities will have to be evaluated to refine the criteria further. However, the current version of the index can be used to assess cities on their suitability for shared mobility services and will assist investors deciding which city is a financially viable market.

Keywords : carsharing, transportation, urban planning, shared mobility city index

Conference Title : ICSRD 2020 : International Conference on Scientific Research and Development

Conference Location : Chicago, United States

Conference Dates : December 12-13, 2020