Project Title:  C-08-24 : Buffalo CarShare
PIN:  R021.21.881
Responsible Unit:  Policy and Planning Division, Office of Policy, Planning &
Project Manager:  Ancar, Robert

Project Goal:
The purpose of this study is to collect detailed data which will be used to verify expected reductions of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in western New York by offering a car share program, where members have on-demand access to vehicles and are charged an hourly rate. With reductions in VMT, greenhouse gases will be reduced and reliance on petroleum lessened. A greater understanding of how car share programs affect behavior of different demographic groups will lead to more effective car share programs in the future. The data collected will also allow an analysis of the potential for incorporating battery electric vehicles and plug-in electric hybrid vehicles into the car share program.

Actions Proposed:
A car share program is planned for Buffalo using non-SPR funds. The operator of the program expects a 51% VMT reduction and 79% CO2 reduction among users of the program. The SPR funds will be used to enhance the operator’s ability to collect data which will be used to verify the program’s environmental benefits. In addition, the data will be made available to NYSDOT for analysis (or analysis under a separate SPR project) to better understand where and when it makes the most sense to support car share programs. Data in a small city is being collected under an ongoing SPR project [C-06-33] and data to be simultaneously collected through another new SPR project on a medium city [C-08-26]. By collecting and analyzing the data from a mix of environments and demographic groups, overall knowledge on the potential to reduce VMT will be significantly enhanced.

The research questions to be address by the three research projects are:
• What travel changes are made in response to car share availability?
• How does auto ownership and use change in response to car share availability?  (e.g. number of cars in household, number of licensed drivers in household, did they own a car, reduction in car ownership, increased use of mass transit)
• What are the general car share use patterns in varying city sizes and demographics?  (e.g. VMT reduction if any, typical trip lengths, weekday or weekend, frequency of use, trip purposes etc.)
Early growth in the service will coincide with 2010 census, strengthening the overall conclusions drawn from the eventual data analysis.
• What are the demographics of car share are customers? (age, income, ethnic background, etc.)
• Why were car share customers attracted to the service? (no car, reduce cost vs owning, increase mobility, environmentally sound, etc.)
• What were the car share challenges faced to be ADA compliance and how were they addressed?
• What are the detail barriers to car share program expansion?

Anticipated Work Products and Accomplishments:
• Software and hardware installation for data collection
• Data will be supplied annually for five years
• Monthly Progress Reports and a Final Report
Proposed Budget: $149,000