

There are indications that more strategic, integrated approaches are starting to happen in North America that could allow local governments to get ahead of the curve and more systematically link the Sharing Economy to a range of sustainable city priorities.

## INTEGRATIVE APPROACHES IN NORTH AMERICA ARE EMERGING

### Sharing Economy Task Forces

A number of cities in the United States have set up Sharing Economy task forces such as those in West Hollywood and the City of Denver. We use the City of Hollywood's Task Force here as an example.

The [City of West Hollywood: Shared Economy Taskforce](#) is comprised of staff and representatives of the Planning Commission, Transportation Commission, Business License Commission, Chamber of Commerce, and Visit West Hollywood. It has met 8 times since July 23, 2014 to assist in the review of impacts and policies related to Sharing Economy businesses, with a primary focus on short term rentals and shared ride services (e.g. Uber and Lyft).

Each meeting included an opportunity for public and staff comment, guest subject matter experts, and time for Task Force deliberation. Subject matter experts included representatives from Airbnb, the LA Short-Term Rental Alliance, Uber, and Lyft. A separate meeting was held with taxi franchise operators.

The Task Force maintained a website that includes meeting agendas, press releases, and policy recommendations. Members of the public that were unable to attend could email their comments to be shared with the Task Force,

or post through EngageWeHo.com, one of the City's engagement platforms.

The Task Force provided recommendations to Council in February 2015, which considered all input received. Ride-sourcing recommendations focused around safety, fairness, insurance, and enforcement of ride-sourcing businesses. STR recommendations addressed education and enforcement to reinforce that STRs are not allowed in West Hollywood.

The West Hollywood Task Force should be commended for its open and transparent process that shows a clear effort to engage and consider the evidence and varied perspectives of members of the public, staff, and Sharing Economy businesses. Yet to date it has only focused on regulating the Sharing Economy in two key areas, and has not yet considered the many opportunities to more proactively enable the Sharing Economy in order to realize goals related to waste management, sustainable energy, social connection, and more.

**Recommendation: Sharing Economy Task Forces or Working Groups should consider a combination of regulatory and other proactive, enabling roles such as those in Table 1.3.**

### Strategic Approaches to the Sharing Economy

Are any local governments in North America developing a more systematic, integrative approach across a variety of areas of the Sharing Economy that blends regulation with enabling roles? The City of Vancouver is going down this path and its journey is summarized in Box 6.2. Seoul, South Korea has taken potentially the most comprehensive approach to the Sharing Economy where city roles blend regulatory and a range of enabling roles. The following Case Study on Seoul's Sharing City Initiative provides more detail.

## CITY CASE THE CITY OF VANCOUVER STRATEGIC APPROACH TO THE SHARING ECONOMY

Enabling the Sharing Economy is not new to the City of Vancouver, but what is new is a recent effort to view the Sharing Economy as part of how the City strategically achieves its priorities.

### HOW THE CITY OF VANCOUVER ENABLES THE SHARING ECONOMY

The City of Vancouver has played a variety of roles in the Sharing Economy linked to a number of city priorities – transportation, local food, waste and footprint reduction, affordability, and community connection. Consider the following examples:

#### CARSHARING

Since 1997, the City of Vancouver has been supporting the expansion of carsharing, including the following four

companies – Modo, ZipCar, Car2Go, and the most recent addition, Evo.<sup>37</sup> The City provides dedicated parking spaces on city streets and in private parking lots and provides residential parking permits, increasing the attractiveness of the service and reducing the number of cars on city streets. They also facilitate the integration of carshare agreements into new multi-family developments, allowing communities to be developed around local walkability.<sup>38</sup> The City of Vancouver's efforts through its Greenest City initiative<sup>39</sup> raise the profile of carsharing across North America and inspire other cities to adopt progressive carsharing policies. Recently, the City threw its support behind the 2015 CarSharing Conference, bringing it to Vancouver and continuing to profile the City's innovation in this area.

### **GRANTS FOR SHARING STARTUPS**

The City of Vancouver provides grants for Sharing Economy start-ups and operations, the most notable of which is the Vancouver Tool Library, which was established in 2011.<sup>40</sup> The Tool Library provides access to, and sharing of, tools used for everything from bicycle repairs to metalworking, electrical, plumbing, and home garden jobs.<sup>41</sup> More recently, The City also provided a grant to ShareShed, an app that connects people wanting to rent outdoor equipment with people looking to rent theirs out. Not only does ShareShed promote healthy, outdoor living but more affordable living, reduced consumption of new equipment, and enhanced community connections.

### **PROVIDING SPACE FOR SHARING**

The City has provided space for a variety of sharing activities, including: space for community gardens in parks, at community centres and in vacant lots; space for community kitchens and swap events at community centres; and light industrial land for a new Green Recycling Hub where resources, office and warehouse space are shared between Recycling Alternatives, a private recycling business, and United We Can, a social enterprise that supports local binners (wastepickers).<sup>42</sup>

### **SUPPORTING RESEARCH ON THE SHARING ECONOMY.**

This has been a key part of the City of Vancouver's approach. A major project supported by the City was The Sharing Project,<sup>43</sup> which enabled researchers to survey and analyze Vancouver citizens to determine how people share in Vancouver and to highlight opportunities for growth in the local Sharing Economy. In an ongoing role the City supports the work of CityStudio – an innovation hub and collaboration of six post-secondary institutions

where university students, community members and City staff co-create, design and launch projects on the ground.<sup>44</sup> CityStudio students conduct research on a variety of topics, including many related to Sharing such as: a Shareable mapjam; Britannia FoodShare; Recreational Sharing Libraries, and developing new community gardens.<sup>45</sup>

One challenge facing the City, which is by no means unique to Vancouver, is the long-term sustainability and development of Sharing Economy activities. While the City can provide grant funding and regulatory frameworks to bring the Sharing Economy into the formal economy, the success of activities and initiatives ultimately relies on the buy-in of individuals within the community and the response of the market and users. In short, grant funding only goes so far, and bylaws and regulations only set up necessary conditions for Sharing Economy activities to develop – community leaders, consumers, and entrepreneurs have to step up and help ensure the Sharing Economy is equitable and sustainable. The City's interest lies in ensuring that the benefits of the Sharing Economy are actually achieved whether through regulation or through the business models that are supported.

### **A NEW STRATEGIC WAY FORWARD**

The City of Vancouver is building on this history of enabling the Sharing Economy and they recognize the opportunity to do more. The promise of the Sharing Economy includes leveraging underused assets, creating social connections, and reducing waste and consumption – many of which are in line with City priorities such as in the Greenest City Action Plan, the Healthy City Strategy, the Emergency Management plan, affordable housing and more.

The City of Vancouver sees the opportunity to leverage the Sharing Economy to help achieve City goals, however the challenge is in understanding how to best enable Sharing practices while protecting citizens. Starting in 2014, the City has created a working group to look at just that – how the City can be more strategic in its support and response to the Sharing Economy. The group is currently bringing together city departments to develop and assess these opportunities.

## CITY CASE SEOUL'S SHARING CITY INITIATIVE

In September of 2012, the Mayor of Seoul, South Korea, Won-Soon Park, announced the Sharing City initiative, paving the way for legislation to enact a wide-reaching, municipal-led shareable city program. Since its inception, Sharing City has rapidly launched initiatives aimed at nurturing existing Sharing Economy programs, both public and private, and fostering the emergence of new areas of activity. These include: the support of Sharing Economy businesses; administrative and financial assistance to sharing organizations and businesses; and promoting citizen engagement through festivals, public hearings and lectures, workshops, courses, and a range of public art events.<sup>46</sup>

Seoul's municipal government has leveraged the city's densely populated form, specifically the high proportion of people living in apartment blocks, to catalyze the creation of in-building lending libraries. It is further leveraging the internet and mobile platforms to connect the city's tech-savvy citizenry into the Sharing Economy, and supporting tech start-ups aimed at spreading sharing throughout the city.<sup>47</sup>

### POLICY FOR THE SHARING ECONOMY

Seoul tackled the regulatory side of Sharing City in a pragmatic way, first establishing a baseline definition of sharing organizations and businesses to determine eligibility for government support and the issuance of certifications, before embarking on its ambitious program of support.<sup>48</sup> The city has been systematic in its approach to enacting Sharing City, identifying three areas of core activity for the municipal government: 1) changing outdated laws and systems; 2) supporting the development of sharing enterprises; and 3) fostering participation by the city's population.

*"The city needs to build infrastructure such as law, institution and social trust capital – the city needs to pave the way and strengthen the ecosystem for the Sharing Economy to thrive."<sup>49</sup>*

– In-dong Cho, Director General of the Seoul Innovation Department

In order to build social trust of Sharing Economy enterprises, the government is officially supporting sharing businesses which lends credibility that would otherwise take time to build. Because citizens deem government-endorsed businesses trustworthy, they experience growth – in some cases doubling sales over the course of a single year.<sup>50</sup>

The municipal government is not taking a radically top-down approach to supporting the Sharing Economy; rather, it sees itself as playing a partnership role with emerging sharing initiatives.<sup>51</sup> This blending of public and private activity towards a common goal is a hallmark of Korean development policies. An interesting extension of Korea's development policy legacy into the emerging Sharing Economy is Seoul's banning of Uber. The city has decided to develop its own app to link into the existing official taxi industry, essentially integrating the taxi service into the broader municipal transportation system.<sup>52</sup>

### INTERNATIONAL NOTORIETY

Sharing City Seoul has become relatively well known for its Sharing Economy activities in a very short span of time. Around the world, an increasing number of cities are starting to experiment with municipality-led shareable city initiatives based on the Seoul's Sharing City model.<sup>53</sup>