

IN PARIS, A CITYWIDE SCHEME TO SHARE ELECTRIC CARS

 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Regular Springwise readers may remember [Vélib'](#), the citywide bike-sharing scheme in Paris that we covered back in 2007. Buoyed by the success of that effort, the city is now apparently planning another ambitious initiative—this time involving electric cars. Paris actually already has a [car-sharing scheme in place](#) with some 5,000 members, but it's privately run and uses traditional cars. [Autolib'](#), on the other hand—from automobile + liberté—is a large-scale, city-backed effort that will provide only clean, electric vehicles. Planned for launch late next year or in early 2011, Autolib' will place some 4,000 electric cars at 1,400 self-service rental and recharging stations in and around Paris for short-term, temporary use. The USD 14 million initiative will likely be operated as a public-private partnership, [according to a BusinessWeek report](#), with oversight by an intergovernmental council. Drivers will not need to make reservations to use a car through Autolib'. Rather, two- and four-seat cars will be available for rent at stands by simply swiping a card in a reader; users will then be able to return the cars at any stand that's convenient. Prices haven't yet been decided, but they'll likely be in the vicinity of USD 6 to USD 9 per half-hour, with monthly subscription fees of USD 22 to USD 29, BW reported. French environmentalists are apparently protesting Autolib's potential to encourage driving and worsen urban congestion. Advocates, on the other hand, say it could reduce carbon emissions by 22,000 tons a year while improving congestion, since fewer Parisians will feel the need to own a car. Either way, there's no doubt the city-backed approach will give the effort a prominence that would be difficult to achieve otherwise, and its similarity to Vélib' could make gaining acceptance considerably easier. One to watch! (Related: [Parking operator launches car-sharing service](#) — [Hertz launches global car-sharing service](#).) Spotted by: Rick Elders

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