

Toyota, Grenoble set stage for test in ride-sharing

September 14 2014, by Nancy Owano



Toyota is testing ride-sharing. As simple as that may sound, the experiment indicates an innovative model for the future of urban transportation. The Grenoble metro area could turn out to be the trial stage for a new city system in mobility. The model, which gets under way next month, calls for electric vehicles connected to a public

transport system; the result is a weave of route planning, reservations and drop-offs. Five partners are sharing the vision: the City of Grenoble, the Metro Area, French electricity company EDF, Toyota, and local car-sharing operator, Cité lib. How it will work: 70 Toyota cars with 27 charging stations will be available for city trips. The stations will be operated by Sodetrel, an affiliate of EDF. Grenoble riders will be under a pricing plan called "3, 2, 1 euros." Users can pick-up one of the 70 vehicles and drop it off at any station near their destination without having to return it to the original pickup point. They will only be charged for the ride.

The 27 [charging](#) stations are in Grenoble, Fontaine, Gières, St Martin D'Hères, Seyssinet-Pariset, et La Tronche, close to tram, bus or train stops

An app to a smartphone tablet or PC shows users the location of cars in the city that have enough charge to be used. Once a user returns the car to any station and plugs it back in, the vehicle's battery starts charging and the use charge ends.

As for the Toyota cars, 35 of the 70 will be the Toyota i-ROAD, a three-wheel personal mobility vehicle and the other 35 will be the Toyota four-wheel vehicle, Toyota Auto Body COMS.

Supporters say the implications for such a model stretch wider than rider convenience and even "clean" transport, reducing CO2 emissions and improving air quality, and will affect city planning. The service will eliminate the need for riders to search for a parking place and the compact size of the cars will affect planning for a future parking infrastructure.

How much will all this cost users? "Once the administrative and badging cost of 25 euros is paid, plug-in vehicle users will be able to use the

charging service for free until 31 December 2014. From January 2015, a pricing schedule will be offered with costs varying between 2 and 5 euros for an hour of charge, depending on charging speed (normal or fast). Charging time will be limited, especially during daytime hours, in order to discourage prolonged parking and allow maximum access to these parking spots," said the Toyota news release on Friday.

Perhaps the most important question of all is, Will this work? Starting October 1, the world will know; the trial entails a three-year period. During this time, project partners will collect data on technical aspects and user behavior.

More information: newsroom.toyota.co.jp/en/detail/3962091/

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