

Making Ripples

Driving Change: Local Ridesharing Options Growing

by Amanda Bancroft

Americans are finally becoming interested en masse in alternatives to privately owned vehicles, which is driving a change in what transportation looks like.

Zipcar is one well-known alternative option that's popular worldwide. Zipcar lets you rent cars for the hour or day, with gas and insurance included in their monthly membership fee of around \$6 per month. The University of Arkansas Fayetteville has two zipcars available in Lot 37 on Garland Avenue. One is a Ford Focus Hatchback that you can rent for \$7.50 an hour or \$77 per day, the other a Ford Escape 4WD that costs \$8.50 an hour or \$83 per day. There's also one zipcar, a Toyota Corolla, available at the Northwest Arkansas airport for \$49 per day or \$9 per hour. Visit ZipCar.com for more information on membership.

With Uber, which was founded in 2009, you can request a ride and pay for it via their mobile phone app. Like Zipcar, they're also global, and operate in cities within 55 countries. In New York City, there are now more Uber cars than yellow taxis! In Fayetteville, the UberX: Low-Cost Uber has a base rate of \$2.50, with several other fees per minute, per mile, and for cancellations. Uber encourages local people to become drivers: "Got a car? Turn it into a money machine. Choose when you drive, where you go, and who you pick up." Visit Uber.com to become a driver or request rides.

The new kid on the block is SUMO Car in Fayetteville, currently in its pilot program they call a "living laboratory" for sustainable urban mobility. Unlike Zipcar and Uber, SUMO is a pay-as-you-go carsharing service that utilizes street-legal, low-speed electric vehicles (LEV's). They're tiny, some might say adorable - and are a more efficient approach to traveling short distances. Parking pods have been set up around town, and it costs about \$1.50 to travel between pods. You're guaranteed a parking space, and each pod doubles as a charging station. Founded by locals Bob Munger and Mikel Lolly, SUMO claims to be the "first electric, mechanized mobility service in the Western hemisphere." They even plan to transition to renewable energy for recharging the cars!

SUMO car's Spring 2015 pod locations will include the Fayetteville Public Library, Ozark Natural Foods, Eco Modern Flats, North Creekside, the UA campus, and downtown Fayetteville. You must be a licensed driver and pay for insurance coverage, and certain higher speed limit roads are off-limits to these vehicles. Unless you're a full-time college student, you must be 21 or older to drive SUMO cars.

According to SUMObility.org, one might "Think of a Sumobile as a partially-enclosed, eco-friendly motor-scooter built for two occupants. Unlike a scooter, our vehicles have a roof, a windshield, seatbelts, and 4 wheels for extra stability. A little known fact about typical scooters is that they emit more air pollution than a full-sized car, and we are very proud of our zero tailpipe emissions and ultra-low carbon footprint."

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