

Ford buys into bike-sharing provider and shuttle service for enhanced mobility

Starting with San Francisco, Ford is teaming up with major global cities on current and future transportation needs to solve congestion issues and help people move about more easily. The company announced an agreement to acquire San Francisco-based crowd-sourced shuttle service, [Chariot](#), and collaboration with [Motive](#), a bike-sharing provider, to expand transport solutions in city centres. Further, Ford is establishing a new City Solutions team to work with cities on their transportation needs.



[Image Source: Business Insider](#)

"We're expanding our business to be both an auto and a mobility company, and partnering with cities on current and future transportation needs is the next major step," said Mark Fields, Ford president and CEO. "For more than 100 years, Ford has been part of the community and the trusted source for automotive transportation. Now, we want to work with communities to offer even more transportation choices and solutions for people - for decades to come."

Developing mobility solutions for increasingly congested cities

Today, half the world's population lives in cities. By 2030, that number is expected to grow to 60 percent. As city populations grow, the challenges tied to moving people and goods around become tougher. Ford is committed to being part of the solution.

"Cities globally are dealing with increased congestion, a growing middle class, and environmental issues - all of which can be alleviated by developing mobility solutions fine-tuned to the unique challenges of each location," said Jim Hackett, chairman, Ford Smart Mobility LLC, the company's subsidiary created to design, build, grow and invest in emerging mobility services.

"At the same time, by expanding our business model to include new forms of transportation - from bikes to dynamic shuttles and more - we are introducing new customers to Ford and creating new revenue and profit opportunities for the future."

Filling the gap between taxi and bus services

Ford's acquisition of Chariot, subject to normal customary closing conditions, will serve as the cornerstone for its new global shuttle services business. The shuttle service is expected to be expanded beyond San Francisco to at least five

additional markets in the next 18 months.

Started in 2014, Chariot operates nearly 100 Ford Transit shuttles along 28 routes throughout San Francisco Bay Area. Today, Chariot's routes are crowd-sourced based on rider demand. In the future, they will operate dynamically - using data algorithms to map efficient routes to best serve the real-time mobility needs of communities.

The Chariot shuttles complement mass transit by filling the gap between taxi and bus services - providing an on-demand, point-to-point transportation option that is convenient, efficient and cost-effective. For every dynamic shuttle that is placed into service during peak travel times, urban congestion could be reduced by up to 25 fewer vehicles, according to a private study for Ford conducted by KPMG.

"Chariot's mission from day one has been to solve the commute by providing a mass transit solution that is fast, reliable and affordable for people living in today's cities," said Ali Vahabzadeh, Chariot co-founder and CEO. "We started our Chariot service with Ford's 15-passenger vehicles and continue to use Ford Transit shuttles to this day. We couldn't be more thrilled to be Ford Smart Mobility's first acquisition and leverage its leadership in transportation to fulfill Chariot's goals worldwide."

An interconnected mobility network

Bikes are another important mode of transportation for commuters in the Bay Area. Ford and Motivate, the global leader in bike share, are working with city officials to add new stations and increase the number of bikes to 7,000 in the Bay Area by the end of 2018. When it launches next year, Ford GoBike will be accessed by users through the [FordPass](#) platform.

"A transportation revolution is coming to the Bay Area," said Jay Walder, CEO of Motivate. "This unique partnership with Ford shows that bike share is no longer alternative transportation; it is central to creating smart, on-demand mobility that represents our values for equity and sustainability. Thanks to the partnership of Metropolitan Transportation Commission, San Francisco, San Jose, Oakland, Berkeley and Emeryville, bike share will soon be available for all in the Bay Area."

Ford plans to develop technologies to use data collected from the bikes to build an interconnected mobility network. This could include real-time data, such as weather conditions, usage patterns, and bike availability, to optimize commutes.

Expanding mobility services worldwide

Ford also is establishing its new City Solutions team to work with cities on expanding mobility services worldwide as part of Ford Smart Mobility LLC. John Kwant - who has worked with several global cities during his Ford career as part of the company's government affairs and global strategy teams - has been tapped to lead the effort as vice president, Ford City Solutions.

The team will address the reality that each city's transportation ecosystem has evolved over time and poses a unique set of transportation challenges. Through a joint discovery process, Ford City Solutions will work with municipalities to propose, pilot and develop mobility solutions tailored to the community. Discussions are already under way with several global cities.

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