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**Ithaca to take a look at car sharing**  
*Guest Columnists*

Directors of two successful car share operations are coming to Ithaca to present the car sharing concept to community leaders and the public. They represent Boulder CarShare and the San Francisco-based City CarShare. Both are models of how car sharing saves drivers money, reduces traffic and parking congestion and encourages more walking, biking, and use of public transit.

Car sharing caters to urban residents who don't need to drive every day. Members pay for quick and easy access to a reliable, clean car for those once-in-a-while trips. Cars are typically kept in small lots in city neighborhoods, on campuses or near public transit facilities. Members reserve a car by phone or e-mail, pick it up at a car-share lot and use it for as many hours as they need.

Car shares can be small or big. Boulder CarShare started when a group of housemates realized they didn't each need to own a car. They sold all their vehicles except one and devised a system for sharing it. By early 2001, they launched their car share as a not-for-profit enterprise. Boulder CarShare now has 65 members and five cars.

City CarShare, also run as a not-for-profit corporation, has over 4,000 members and about 100 vehicles, including pickup trucks, hybrids and even a couple of Mini Cooper convertibles.

City CarShare lots are scattered throughout the San Francisco and Oakland area, including locations near BART transit terminals. To join City CarShare, drivers pay a flat annual fee that includes fuel, insurance, parking, cleaning and maintenance of the cars. Rentals cost \$1 for 15 minutes (\$4 an hour) plus 44 cents per mile. Members are billed monthly for the total time they used the cars.

The economics of car sharing make it a winning choice for many urban or neighborhood dwellers who live fairly close to key destinations. The annual cost of owning a car is far higher than using a car share service. Zipcar, a for-profit car share based in Cambridge, Mass., reports that 40 percent of its members have either sold a car or have decided not to buy one. City CarShare reports that 29 percent of its members have sold at least one car, compared to 8 percent in a control group. Car sharing also reduces auto emissions and fossil fuel consumption.

City CarShare recently announced that since it opened in 2001, its members have

saved over a million gallons of gasoline, equating to 20 million pounds of carbon dioxide emissions. Many members combine car-sharing with walking, biking, motor scooters and use of public transit. Not having a car and being more aware of the cost of each trip, inspires people to look for alternatives to automatically jumping in the car every time they need to go somewhere.

Could car-sharing work in Ithaca? That's what a group of planners, investors, local government and college officials and interested residents will be investigating at the first "Ithaca Car Share Summit." Karen Worminghaus, director of Boulder CarShare, and Amy Anton and Rifkin Young of City Car Share will discuss how they each built successful car shares in their communities, and summit participants will consider the feasibility of a car share in Ithaca.

The Ithaca Car Share Summit will take place 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 26, at the Borg-Warner Community Room, Tompkins County Public Library. That evening, Worminghaus and Anton will participate in a free presentation 7-9 p.m. in 101 Phillips Hall on the Cornell University campus.

Sponsors of the car share events include Ecovillage at Ithaca, Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council, transportation and sustainability offices at Cornell University, Ithaca College, TCAT, Curb Your Car Coalition and the City of Ithaca. For more information, visit the Ithaca Car Share Web site at [www.ithacacarshare.org](http://www.ithacacarshare.org) or call 274-5570.

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