

Ithaca Car Share wins grants; will start carsharing soon

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by Elizabeth Bauchner

Earlier this month, Ithaca Car Share, a new organization that plans to provide a small fleet of mostly hybrid cars to members who can use the cars in hourly increments, was awarded two grants totaling \$177,220 by New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) and New York State Energy Research and Development Agency (NYSERDA).

"We're a little amazed that this is happening so fast," admits Jennifer Dotson, Ithaca Car Share's coordinator.

In February, the group will launch its first carshare program at Eco-Village with two cars. They chose Eco-Village mainly because the co-housing community already has an informal carsharing program, and working with them will give Ithaca Car Share some time to work out any kinks in the program, such as online registration and signing up for use of the cars.

In May, the program moves downtown, with two more cars being added to the Fall Creek area. Then in August, Cornell will get two cars and so will Ithaca College.

Earlier this year, Ithaca Car Share held a logo design contest. The winner, Emily Dean, submitted a design that connects three green cars in a circle. All of the cars will display the new logo.

"Car sharing is geared toward anybody who needs a car for just a few hours at a time," explains Dotson. "It also works really well with car rental. If you need a car for an overnight or a weekend, for example, we recommend you rent a car."

Dotson gave a number of examples of situations where car sharing works—for example, students or professors who commute to school, but who occasionally need to leave campus for medical appointments or to run other errands. It's also good for couples or families, she says, who sometimes need the use of a second car but don't want to own two cars.

Carsharing is much cheaper than buying a car. While Dotson could not give final figures on how much carsharing in Ithaca will cost, she did estimate that membership fees will cost about \$50 per year, and use of the car will cost about \$7 per hour, or \$.40 per mile. Those costs include insurance and gas.

For more information, please see: <http://www.ithacacarshare.org/>

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