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Ithaca Carshare Receives Start-up Funding



by Ithaca Carshare

Ithaca Carshare has been awarded \$177,220 to support its first two years of operation. Organizers plan to offer the first carsharing services in the Ithaca area as early as next spring and to expand operations later in 2007.

"We will start with two cars at EcoVillage, a neighborhood that has already had experience with informal carsharing, and then—after we've worked out any kinks—we plan to expand the service to downtown and then to the Ithaca College and Cornell campuses," said Ithaca Carshare coordinator Jennifer Dotson.

Carsharing works on a membership basis, explained Tim Logue, City of Ithaca Transportation Engineer and a member of the Ithaca Carshare steering committee. Members who sign up have 24-hour access to a variety of new, clean, insured and well-maintained vehicles that may be rented by the hour. Carsharing solves many transportation problems for people who don't want the burden of owning a car for occasional use.

The funds are being provided through a cost-shared research agreement with the New York State Department of Transportation and the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority. Ithaca Carshare is a not-for-profit whose governing board includes representation from Ithaca College, Cornell University, EcoVillage at Ithaca, the City of Ithaca, and the Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council.

Carsharing services have been successfully established in many other communities in the U.S., Canada, and Europe. Carsharing has been shown to save drivers money, reduce traffic and parking congestion, and to fit well with other modes of alternative transportation such as biking, walking, and using public transit.

"We did quite a bit of market research that indicates that the Ithaca area is ready for a carshare service," said Dotson. "Getting the state funding has been a real boost. We're a bit amazed ourselves at how quickly this is all moving along."

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