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Ithaca's 'Car Share' program

By Kristen Drew

ITHACA -- In the city of Ithaca, many people walk, bike, or take the bus when they need to get somewhere, but when bad weather strikes or they want to get out of town, it hasn't always been so easy without a car.

Leah Elliott said, "I'm a Cornell graduate student. I don't have a car now and definitely want to get to know the area better, but not sure I want to take on the cost of a car."

It's a cost that can add up, but now the Ithaca Carshare program is designed to make life a little easier for people who don't want the monthly expenses of owning a car.

"It's something they can add to their transportation options-- if you can walk and bike places that's really great, take the bus sometimes, but now you can also take a car even if you don't own it-- without paying an arm and a leg for rental fees," said Andy Goodell of Ithaca Carshare.

There are fees for the Ithaca car share program, but it varies depending on how much you plan to use the car. Members pay \$30 dollars to apply. Then, there's a monthly fee of \$20 or an annual fee of \$50 (depending on the plan you choose). Each time members use the car, there's also a usage and mileage fee. As a Carshare member, gas, insurance, cleaning, and maintenance are all included in the fees.

Member Leah Elliott made a reservation to pick up a car today. She said, "It seems like a very Ithaca thing to have the car share-- have everyone working together, taking care of the environment. I like the convenience. I live a couple blocks from this carshare, so it's definitely easy to get to and easy to bring back."

So far, 70 people have signed up for the Carshare program and of that number three quarters say they had a car or they're planning to get rid of one. Goodell said, "We've already taken 39 cars off the road from members-- last time I counted-- which is great. Parking is a little bit tight in Ithaca. Traffic is always adding up, ya know? So anything we can do to reduce that certainly helps."

Members make a reservation to pick up the car at one of six locations in Ithaca. Once they're done with their trip, they return the car where they picked it up.