

# Syracuse, NY, Implements Community-Based Car-Sharing

*Integrates Car-Sharing Into Existing Transportation Network; Promotes Sustainable Community Living*

CuseCar is a new, not-for-profit, community-based, car-sharing organization serving the city of Syracuse, New York. The purpose of the program is to promote sustainable transportation, support environmental, social and economic growth, and integrate car-sharing options into the existing transportation network of Syracuse and Onondaga County.

CuseCar is integrated into the community to enhance existing transportation systems by offering a complementary alternative. The program seeks to promote sustainable living while reducing transportation and parking issues in and around the city. The official launch will take place on November 20 but CuseCars are being rolled out in advance to a few key locations. The first three vehicles will be made available at SUNY ESF, an educational facility, Synapse, a corporate business sponsor, and in a local urban community, the Hawley-Green Neighborhood.

In keeping with a commitment to environmentally friendly transportation options, CuseCars initially will offer four alternative fuel vehicles (AFVs), including three Toyota Prius hybrids and one Honda natural gas vehicle.

As the program expands, cars will be made available at designated parking areas, also known as "origination" stations,

throughout the city. A total of 10 vehicles are expected to be in place by the end of the year and more will follow next year.

A steering committee made up of local and regional stakeholders was convened to work with city officials in identifying and securing designated locations where CuseCars might fulfill the greatest need and have the most impact on the community. The committee also helps to secure local sponsors to partner with CuseCars.

The program works by allowing up to 150 members to sign up for a car at each location. There is a one-time \$40 sign up fee and an annual membership fee of \$100.

The hourly rate is \$12, and 60 miles are provided free with each use. Additional mileage costs are calculated based on current gasoline prices, with costs varying according to fluctuations in gasoline prices. Members can go online and register to use the vehicles.

Ultimately, CuseCars hopes to help develop infrastructure for new alternative vehicles throughout the Syracuse area. The group is looking at grant funding in 2010 to install solar panels and to develop a network of fueling stations around the community.

According to Vita DeMarchi, co-founder of CuseCar, there are more than 20 not-for-profit car-sharing operations fo-

cused on the needs of individual communities. A unique feature of CuseCars is the member-to-member services the program offers. These include "go safe," "go ambassador," "go valet" and "go care" programs in which members help other members complete tasks or accomplish activities they are unable or unavailable to do for themselves.

An additional program, "go to," highlights community-based businesses and offers discounts at some area businesses. It also gives local businesses an opportunity to advertise on the organization's website.

CuseCars expects to offer economic benefits to the community by channeling money that might have gone toward the purchase and maintenance of automobiles to stores, restaurants and other leisure-oriented endeavors in the community instead.

For more information, visit [www.cusecar.com](http://www.cusecar.com) or contact Sarah Roberts at [info@cusecar.com](mailto:info@cusecar.com) or 315-CUSECAR (287-3227).

*The Urban Transportation Monitor*, ISSN 10404880, is published bi-weekly, except during January and August when only one issue per month appears (22 issues per year), by Lawley Publications, 6813 Jeremiah Ct., Fairfax Station, VA 22039, Tel: (703)764-0512, Fax: (703)764-0516, e-mail: [editors@lawleypublications.com](mailto:editors@lawleypublications.com). Subscriptions \$295 per year. Periodicals postage paid at Fairfax, VA. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to *The Urban Transportation Monitor*, P.O. Box 12300, Burke, VA 22009-2300.

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*A CuseCar in Syracuse, NY (Photo: Courtesy of CuseCar)*