

Cars double on Penn's campus

Danielle Chornock

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PhillyCarShare and the University of Pennsylvania entered into an unprecedented agreement in late January 2007 to expand the car-sharing non-profit's services on their campus.

The service will expand to 40 cars around UPenn's campus, roughly double the number of cars before the partnership was made, according to Clayton Lane, a co-founder of PhillyCarShare and the Deputy Executive Director.

Already available at Drexel and other Philadelphia area colleges, along with hundreds of cars around the city, Philly CarShare's UPenn partnership is unique. The West Philly institution is taking part in its entirety - all 30 schools, all employees, and all students. They are also providing a \$25 driving credit to the first 1,000 employees to sign up, according to a PhillyCarShare press release.

So far, the company says they have already received 1,000 new memberships from the UPenn partnership.

In an effort to promote sustainability and an environmentally friendly community, PhillyCarShare has also allocated one percent of their revenue to go into a fund for "green" projects on UPenn's campus.

University of Pennsylvania is the first to join as an institution, but Drexel also has PhillyCarShare on campus. There are eight cars on the University City Main campus, and three more will be added in April 2008.

"It's great. It's a perfect way to get to the places in Philly that the subway doesn't go," Daniele Wolfrom, a senior majoring in interior design, and a PhillyCarShare member said.

PhillyCarShare is targeting colleges because most other rental companies will not rent to anyone under 25 without charging a large insurance fee. PhillyCarShare has no fee and the minimum age to join is 18.

"PhillyCarShare is only on campus because of the USGA," Clayton said. "They wanted us; they talked to the administration, who contacted us. You can see the power of student government."

Heather Horner, a business major without a car on campus, said she sees the need for PhillyCarShare at Drexel.

"I have to constantly rely on other people for rides," Horner said. "I need rides to and from the train station, for food shopping, and to go to the mall. I would definitely use PhillyCarShare."

Horner said PhillyCarShare is a better idea than Zipcar, another car sharing company with about three cars on or near the University City campus. According to the Zipcar web site, there is an application fee and annual fee, and an age minimum of 21, which excludes many college undergrads. Both companies have hybrids and luxury cars, but only PhillyCarShare gives drivers credit for using hybrids over other cars, and is a non-profit organization.

However, there are some students who do not see the value in car-sharing. Katarzyna Pieklo, an information technology major from North Jersey, said she lives to have her car around.

"There is no way I am giving up my car. I need it," she said.

"I like to drive around for fun, spontaneous road trips, and I like having my own car," Christine Lopez, a health sciences major, said.

To date, PhillyCarShare has over 35,000 members, and roughly 14,000 of them have given up their cars. PhillyCarShare has about 400 vehicles and says that there is rarely ever a time where no car is available.

"We want to change the way people think about mobility," Clayton said.

Clayton said he hopes to one day have a PhillyCarShare car available just as easily as the bus every two blocks in every city and area in Philadelphia.