

2015 Downtown Ithaca Alliance & ITCTC

Downtown Transportation Survey Report

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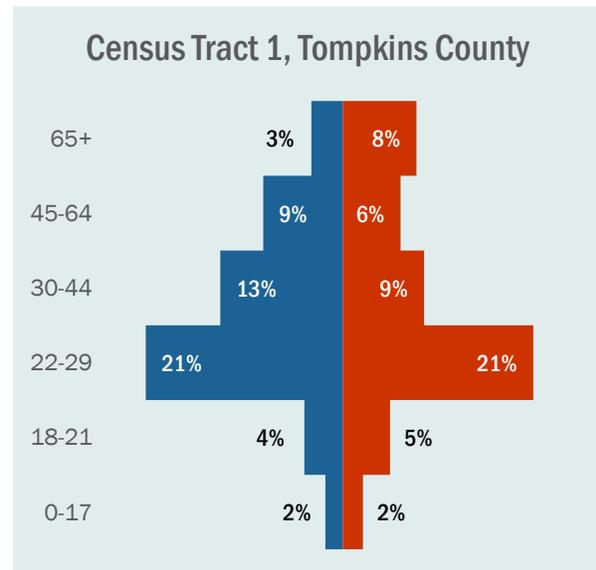
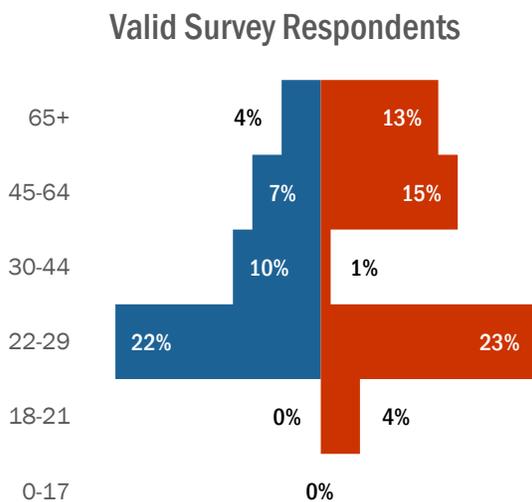
Neighborhood Demographics

Population

The population of downtown Ithaca, as defined by the boundaries of the Downtown Ithaca Alliance's tax jurisdiction, is around **1120 people and 797 households**. Not all buildings were targeted for the survey. The estimated population of the buildings that were surveyed is around 560, and 17% of those residents completed the survey in full.

Age & Sex

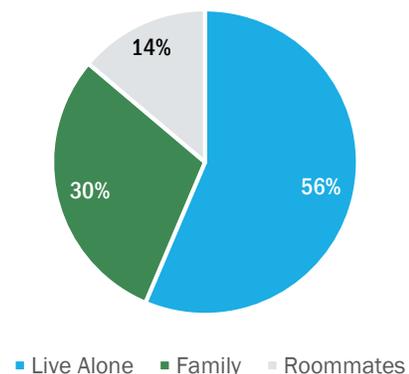
The makeup of downtown residents can be summarized in two groups: **a slight majority of people under 30 and a complementary group of people over 30**, where both groups are gender-balanced (see Census Tract 1 chart). Survey respondents match the expected breakdown in terms of age with a slight majority of people under 30. The differences, such as an overrepresentation of women over 45 and an underrepresentation of middle-aged women, arise from the specific buildings that were targeted in the survey.



Household Types

The types of households that exist in the downtown reflect the stock of rental apartments available in the area, which are primarily studios and 1 bedroom apartments. **The average number of people living in each household amongst survey respondents is 1.53.**

Types of Households



Occupation

The occupations of the survey respondents can be roughly defined as **40% students, 40% workers, and 20% retirees**. Within the employed population there is a variety of ages. It should be noted that since the survey has a larger proportion of respondents over 45, the proportion of retirees in the downtown population is possibly lower. Nevertheless, this split between “life stages” could be used to segment the population, especially as transportation barriers and benefits differ between each segment.

New Movers

People who moved within the past year make up 44% of the survey respondents, a proportion that is congruent with census data. Amongst the new movers in the survey, **students are the primary group of new movers into the downtown core**, followed by workers under 30.

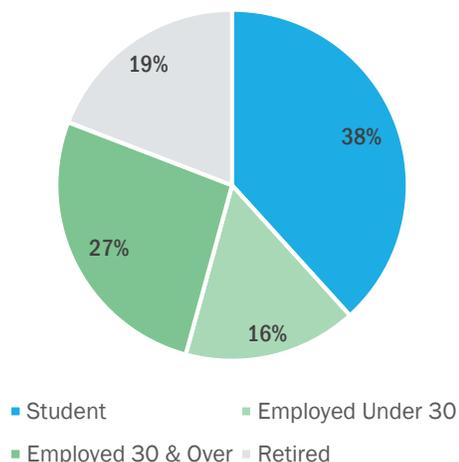
Within new movers who answered the survey, **two-thirds come from outside the county**, providing a large cohort that would benefit greatly from a transportation program that introduces them to their options in Tompkins County. Using ZIP code data provided by the respondents, it was determined that **nearly 60% of new movers from outside the county come from an urban area**.

Given this information, there are both benefits and challenges that come from targeting new movers:

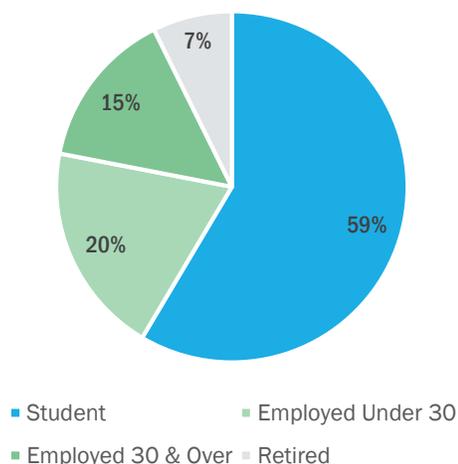
Benefits	Challenges
Potentially more influential population* Can influence decision to bring vehicle	Primarily younger audience Higher turnover rate

* Survey results did not indicate increased receptivity of a transportation program amongst those who have moved recently, but other TDM programs have reported that new movers may be able to implement changes in their daily routines. New movers in Ithaca seem to quickly adopt the transportation behaviours of their peers.

Occupation of Residents



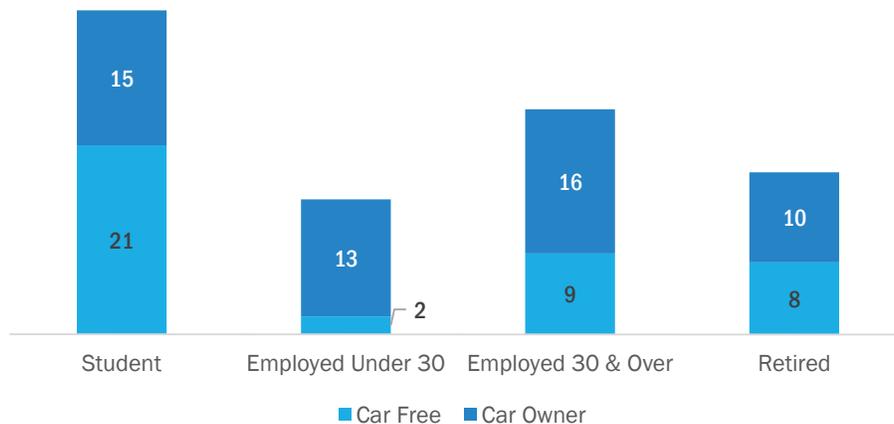
Occupation of New Movers



Car Ownership

While there are a variety of transportation options available to downtown residents, **57% of survey respondents indicated that they own a car in Ithaca**. Most tellingly, a majority of new movers to the downtown area (56%) bring their cars with them. Car ownership rates vary by “life stage.”

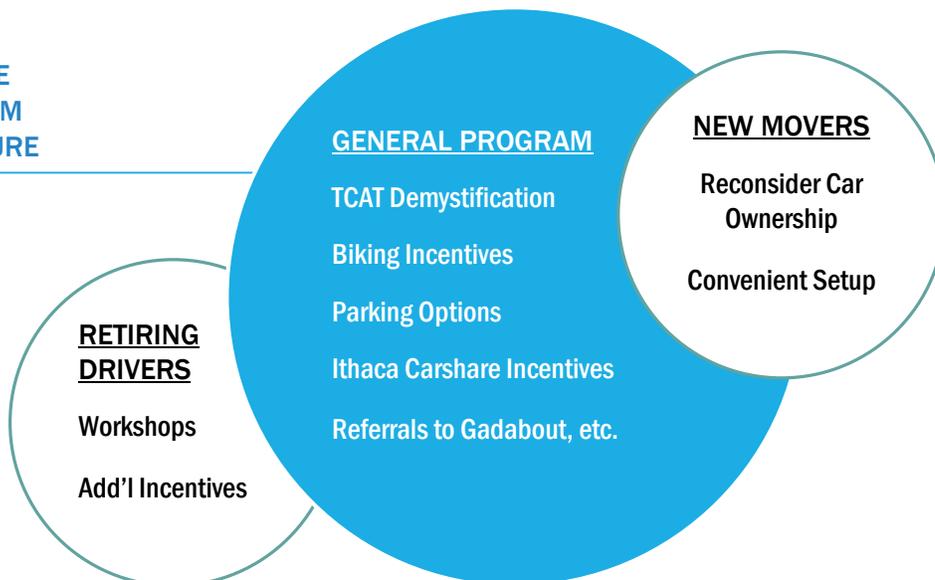
Car Ownership by Occupation



Considerations for a Downtown Transportation Demand Management Program

A TDM program in downtown Ithaca should target new movers with the intent of reducing car ownership so that newcomers are motivated to use the transportation options available to them. However, new movers did not seem to be more receptive to a TDM program compared to non-movers in the same situation, and the effects of targeting new movers exclusively will diminish over time due to turnover. Targeting all downtown residents with a general program, with additional initiatives tailored to new movers (a “VIP treatment”), may be a good way to overcome these two obstacles.

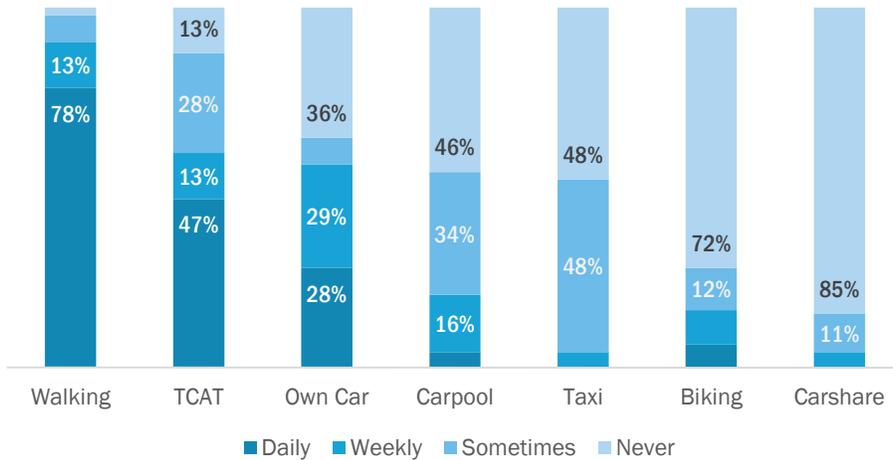
EXAMPLE PROGRAM STRUCTURE



Transportation Behaviors

Due to the demographics of downtown residents and the amenities and services that are concentrated in the area, the adoption rate is very high for two sustainable modes of transportation: walking and transit. However, a fair number of trips occur via personal vehicle, which hints at unmet needs in terms of transportation and downtown amenities. The low levels of biking and carshare, which could replace personal vehicle trips, could be pointing to barriers in their use.

Frequency of Use of Modes of Transportation

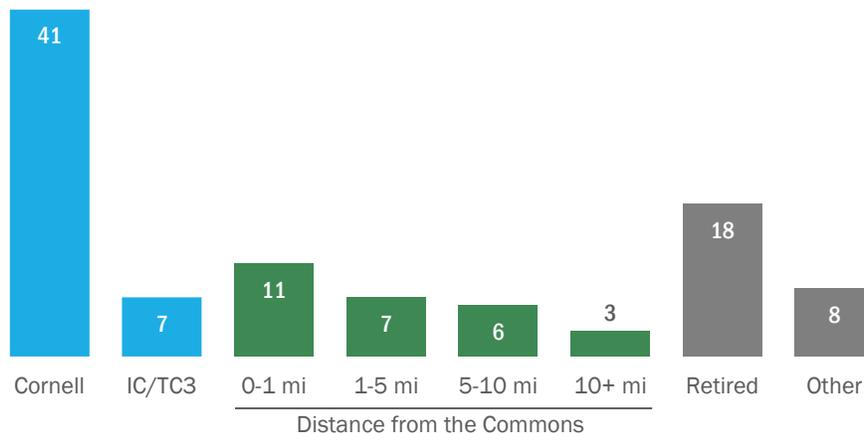


Destinations

Work and School

Most survey respondents indicated that they go to Cornell for work or school. Of those who worked outside of a college, most tended to work in or close to downtown. Additionally, a significant number of residents indicated that they are retired, self-employed, or stay-at-home parents so their travel patterns may not be as discrete as a typical commuter's patterns.

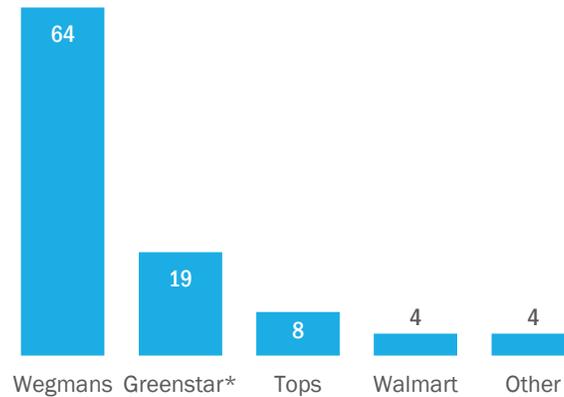
Work or School Destination



Groceries and Shopping (for Clothing)

While the top grocery store in Tompkins County is not a surprise, the overwhelming preference for it is. Greenstar is the second-top choice; however, survey respondents did not specify to a large degree whether they shopped at the main Greenstar location or the smaller downtown Greenstar “Oasis” location in Dewitt Mall.

Favorite Grocery Destination



To shop for clothing, most respondents go to chain stores outside the downtown area such as Target, Kohl’s, TJ Maxx, and Ithaca Mall in general. Some respondents noted the Internet as a place where they shop. Two stores in the downtown area that were mentioned more than once were Trader K’s and Benjamin Peters.

The lack of appealing destinations for grocery and general shopping means that some “neighborhood” trips actually occur outside of the downtown area. While not far, these trips go to places where transit, biking, and walking are less accessible or less appealing modes of transportation. This is apparent in the mode share for each of these kinds of trips.

Mode Share for Groceries

1. Own Car (50%)

2. Walking (15%)

3. TCAT (14%)

4. Carpool (9%)

5. Biking (5%)

6. Ithaca Carshare (4%)

Mode Share for Shopping

1. Own Car (45%)

2. Walking (26%)

3. TCAT (22%)

4. Carpool (6%)

5 (TIE). Biking (1%)

5 (TIE). Taxi (1%)

Dining, Entertainment, and Other Social Gatherings

A variety of establishments in downtown Ithaca serve as respondents' favorite dining establishment, with Viva Taqueria, Just a Taste, and Taste of Thai being mentioned several times. When prompted for their favorite entertainment venue, over 20 respondents wrote in Cinemapolis. Lastly, when asked for their favorite place to meet friends and family, respondents answered with various downtown establishments or simply with "The Commons" or "Downtown." **Survey responses underscore downtown Ithaca's function as the city (and the county's) civic center, especially for those that live within its confines.** Respondents indicated that they usually walk for these types of trips.

Barriers & Issues

The barriers to taking TCAT and biking are examined in-depth due to the depth of questions in the survey regarding those two modes. Walking was a mode that elicited little examination with its high adoption rate of over 90% (weekly and daily). Parking concerns and carshare use are also examined.

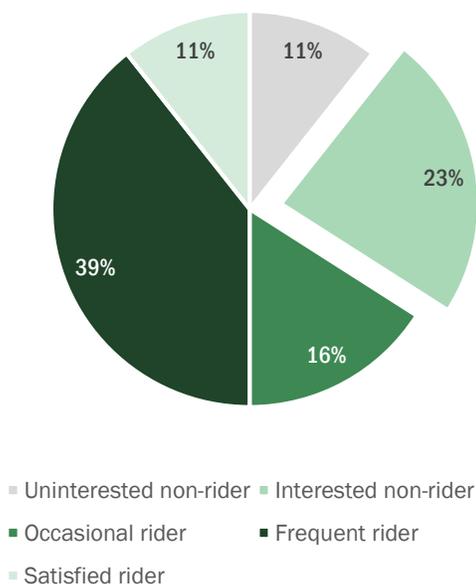
TCAT

By comparing respondents' frequency of taking TCAT with the improvements they would like to see in the system, a better picture was produced of the barriers faced by potential and current riders.

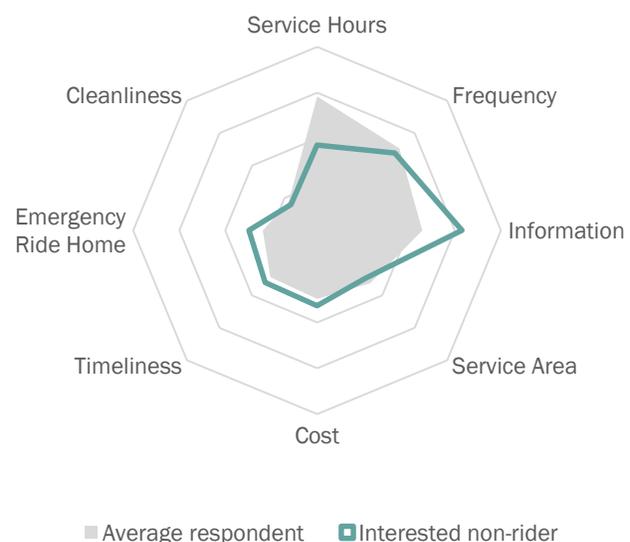
Respondents were grouped by how often they take TCAT and the responses to a question about TCAT improvements were compared between groups to see how respondents in each state of change value those possible improvements differently.

Most interestingly, the analysis found that about **a quarter of respondents have never or seldom taken TCAT but would be interested in taking it more often primarily if information about it were improved.** These interested non-riders are primarily not Cornell-affiliated frequent car users. Additional profiles of TCAT barriers by state of change can be found in Appendix A.

TCAT State of Change of Respondents



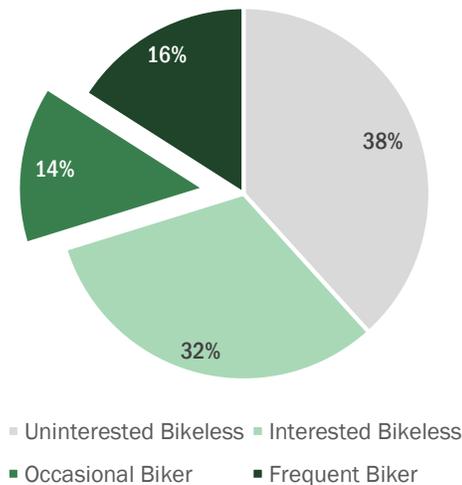
Ranking of TCAT Improvements



Biking

Similarly, respondents were divided depending on their biking frequency, access to a bike, and the improvements they would like to see regarding the experience of biking in Ithaca.

Biking State of Change of Respondents

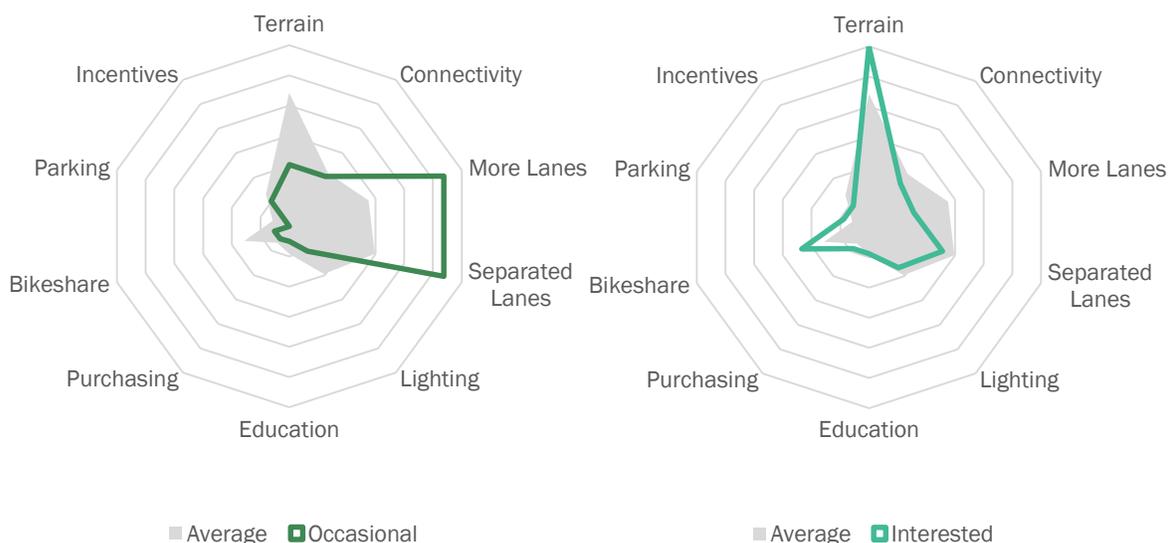


The segmentation revealed that **over 60% of respondents would like to bike more often but half of those do not own bikes.** Of those who do own bikes, half only bike occasionally, mainly for recreation rather than as a serious mode of transportation. The barriers that frequent, occasional, and interested bikers face differ between them, and depending on the focus of this TDM program one group will benefit from certain improvements more than others.

Occasional bikers overwhelmingly chose additional bike lanes and separated bike lanes as an improvement that would encourage them to bike more, which may echo concerns about safety which can be partly addressed by education (even

though education-focused improvements polled rather low overall). **Interested but currently bikeless respondents indicated Ithaca's terrains and the unavailability of a bikeshare system as barriers to biking.** Upon further examination, most interested respondents are students at Cornell University, so a biking-focused program aimed at this demographic should clearly focus on people's trips in Ithaca's flatlands and not their trips up the hill. Additional profiles and a discussion on current bicycle parking conditions are available in Appendix B.

Ranking of Biking Improvements



Parking

With car ownership rates at 57% among survey respondents, parking conditions were included in the scope of the survey and even beyond as some respondents wrote about parking problems in optional open-ended questions. **Concerns about parking touch upon pricing, availability, and inconvenience of existing options for long-term or overnight parking.** These concerns arise from downtown Ithaca’s unique parking situation within the county, confusing and limited information, and a mismatch of parking expectations that is not addressed before residents bring their vehicles downtown.

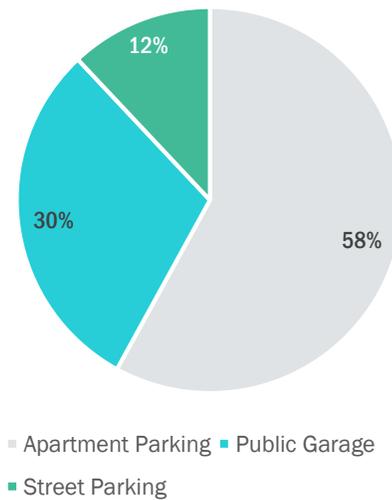
The majority of respondents indicated that they parked their vehicles in parking lots that are adjacent to their apartments, often for an extra fee attached to their rent. The majority may also be reflective of the fact that the majority of buildings surveyed had adjacent apartment parking. **Residents in buildings without adjacent parking, often student-centered buildings, parked their vehicles in public garages or on the street.**

Given that most people park nearby their apartments, it was not unexpected that enthusiasm for remote parking was lukewarm at best. The idea of remote parking fared better with respondents who parked overnight on the street, followed by those in public garages. **The cost of remote parking may be influential in the success of the project given that people who currently park on the street overnight do so for free.**

Ithaca Carshare

The low adoption of Ithaca Carshare by respondents show potential for improvement in registrations and further reduction in car ownership within the downtown core. Ithaca Carshare covers the transportation needs that other modes are not suitable for. Due to the lack of questions regarding carshare in the survey, there are no findings from the survey. However, an analysis of membership data provided by Ithaca Carshare shows that the majority of members in the downtown core are Cornell students. A complete analysis of the results can be found in Appendix C. Regardless, **membership in Ithaca Carshare may be an attractive incentive to convince people to go car-free in downtown Ithaca.** A flowchart that explains the changes in the decision-making process that a TDM program could have can also be found in Appendix C.

Overnight Parking Location



Reception to Remote Parking by Current Parking Location

Apartment Parking		Public Garage	
		No	Yes
No	Maybe	Maybe	Yes
	Yes	Street Parking	No
		Street Parking	Yes
Maybe	Yes	Maybe	Yes

Considerations for a Transportation Demand Management Program

The segmentation exercise by state of change shows that survey respondents from all walks of life are interested in moving more sustainably. For a TDM program to be most impactful, however, messaging should be focused to the specific segments (life stage, movers, or affiliation) that are most interested in each transportation mode or initiative. This does not preclude people who may not fit the prescribed focus segment to participate in the program of their choice. Due to the outsized impact students and Cornell University has on the segmentation of downtown residents, **cooperation with the university is essential to target Cornell-affiliated potential and current residents.**

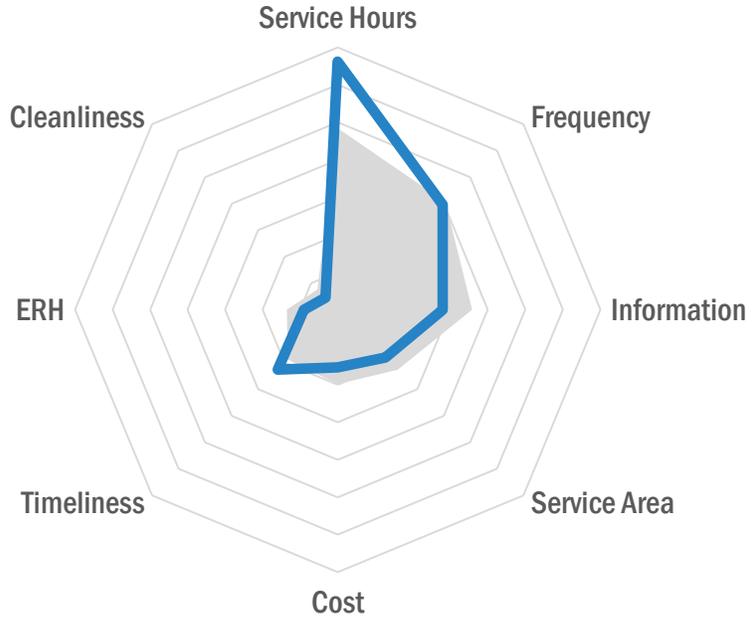
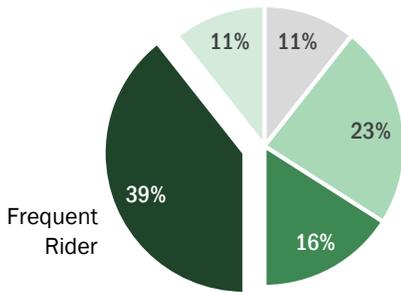
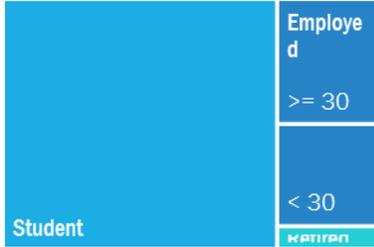
Additionally, **cooperation with property owners will be key to contact new movers prior to their arrival to downtown Ithaca.**

Target Segment		Target Mode Shift or Initiative
Students or Cornell affiliates	➡	Biking in and around downtown
Non-students or non-affiliated	➡	TCAT introduction and encouragement
New movers with vehicles*	➡	Parking and Ithaca Carshare comparison

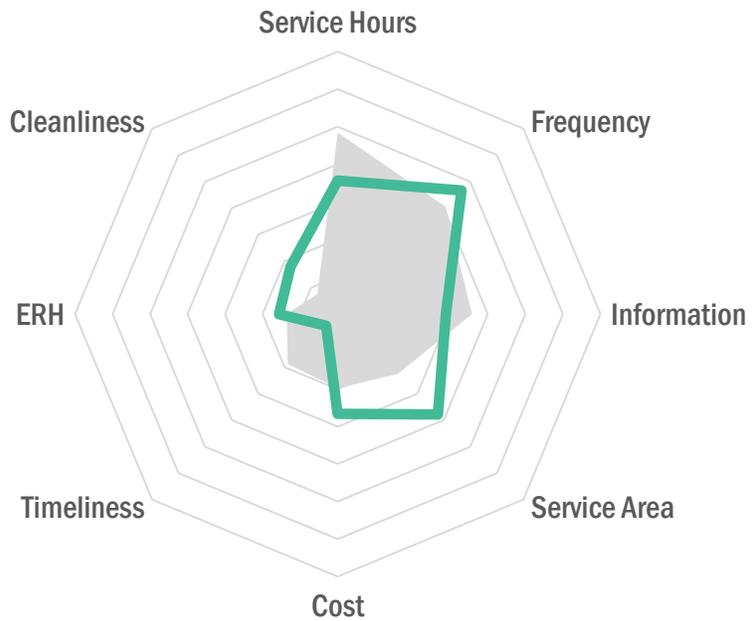
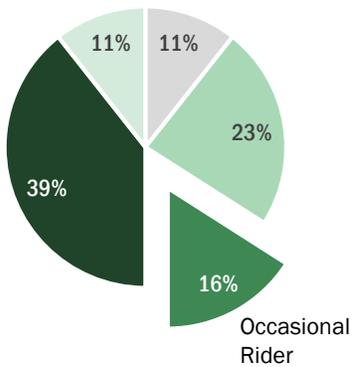
* New movers with vehicles would be introduced to their corresponding initiative *prior to their arrival to downtown Ithaca and in addition to* their appropriate target segment, while new movers without vehicles would be introduced to their appropriate target segment primarily.

Appendix A – TCAT Priorities by State of Change Segmentation

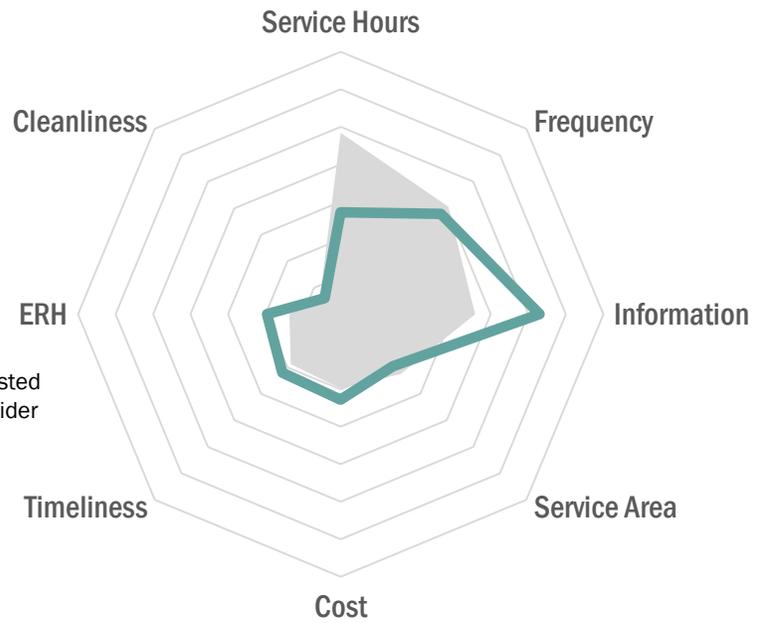
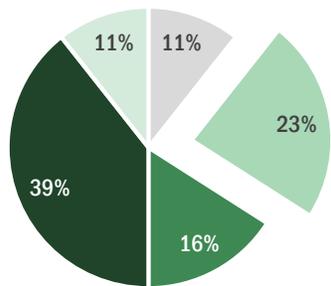
Frequent Rider (Average respondent in grey)



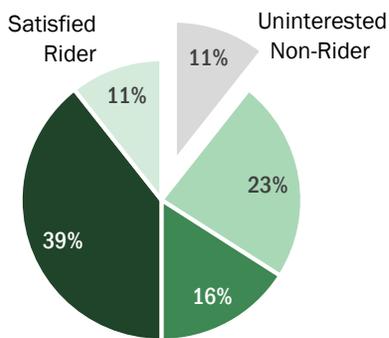
Occasional Rider



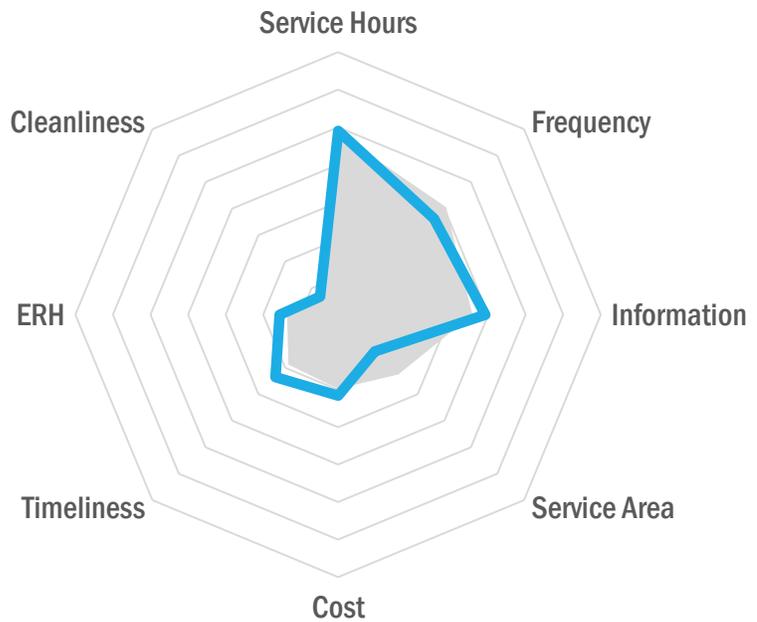
Interested Non-Rider



Uninterested Non-Rider

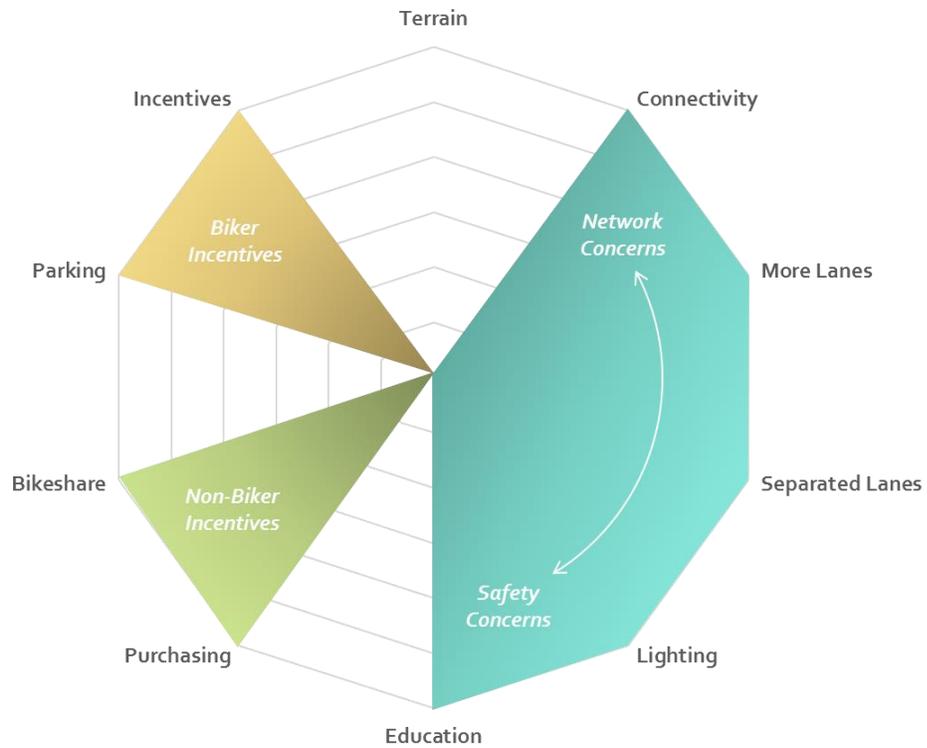


New Mover (Less than 1 year ago)

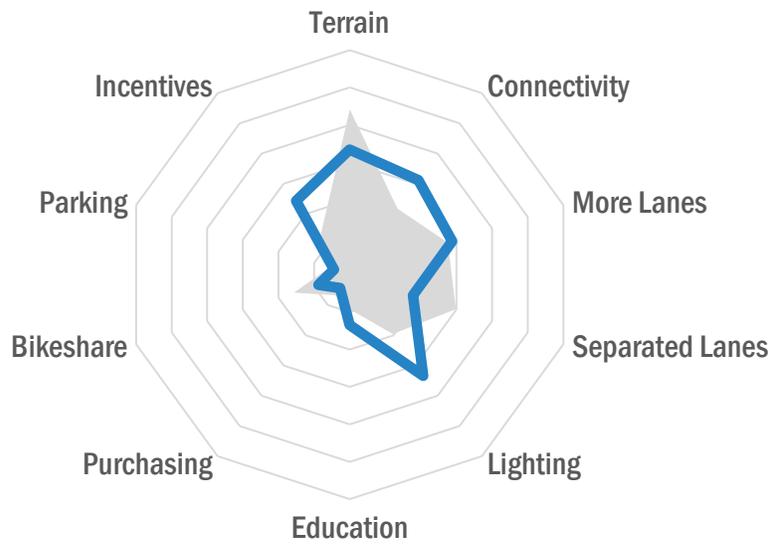
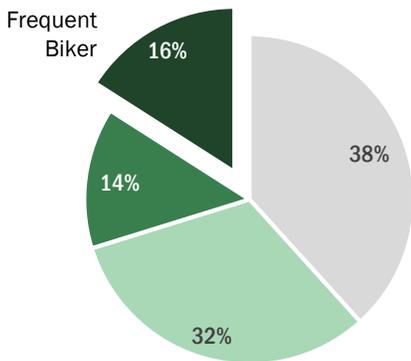
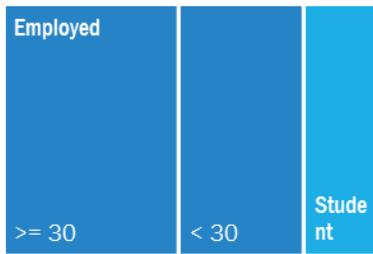


Appendix B – Biking Priorities by State of Change Segmentation

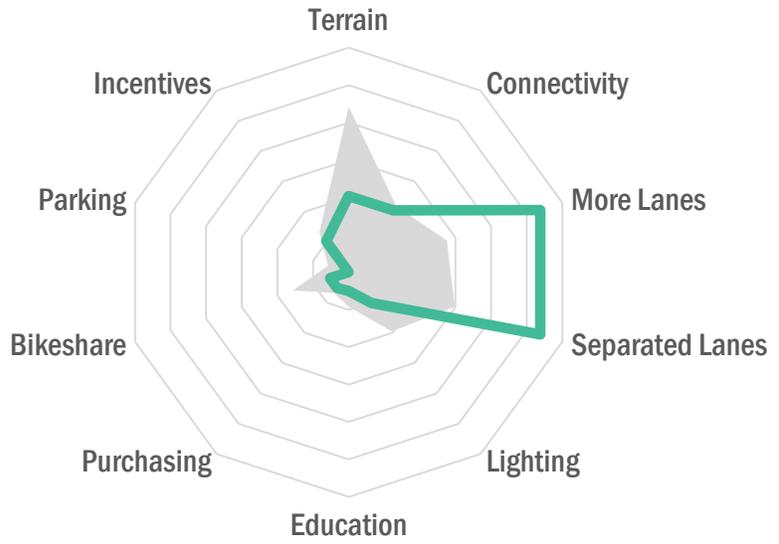
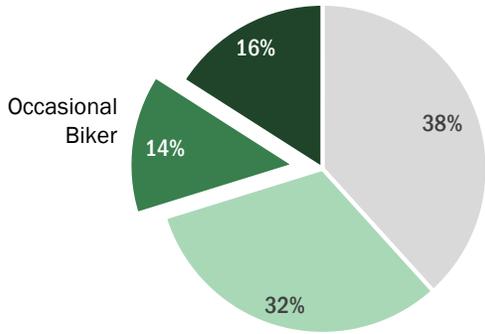
How to Interpret Radar Chart Priorities



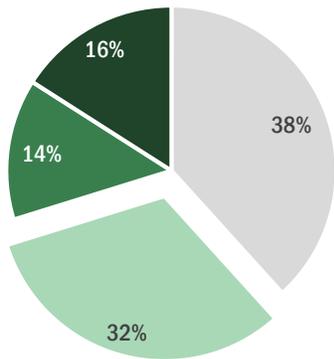
Frequent Biker (Average respondent in grey)



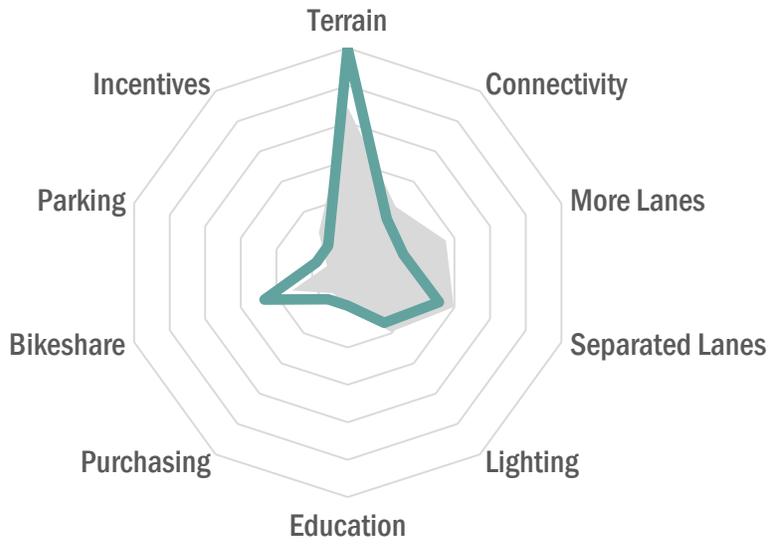
Occasional Biker



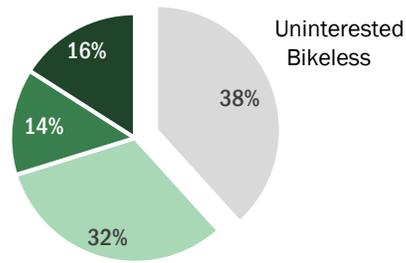
Interested Bikeless



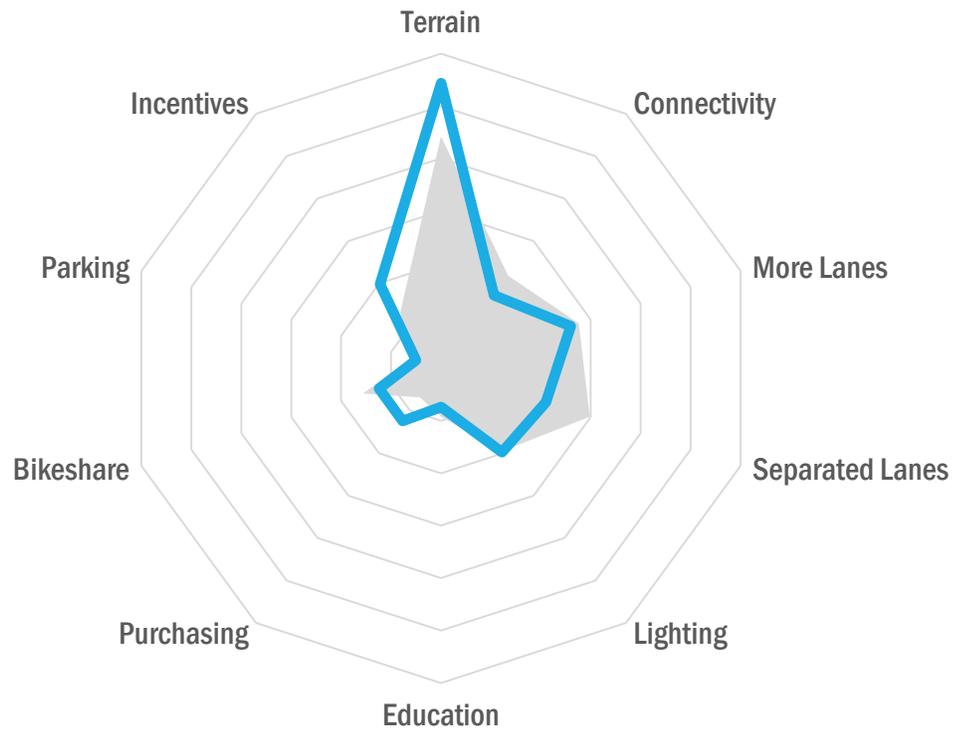
Interested Bikeless



Uninterested Bikeless



New Mover (Less than 1 year ago)



Bicycle Parking

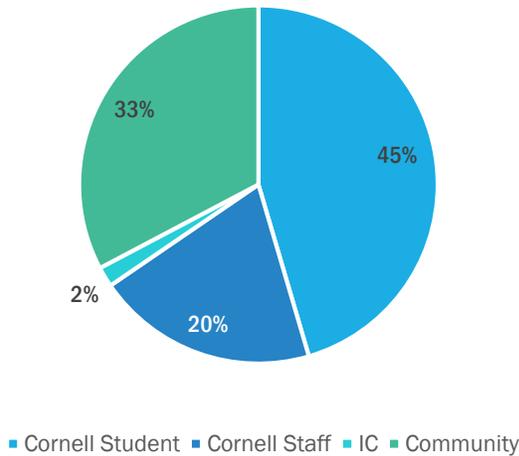
Currently, **72% of survey respondents who own bicycles store them overnight inside their own apartments**, while a few lock them to outdoor bike racks and even fewer store them in bicycle storage rooms. While this seems to bode well for the idea of a secure bicycle parking facility in the downtown area, **only 5 respondents indicated that bicycle parking would encourage them to bike more often**, and 4 of the 5 respondents do not currently own a bike.

Bicycle parking would be a behaviour change incentive that would be attractive to a few individuals, and it would address a potential but minor barrier to owning and riding a bicycle in Ithaca. Planned investments in bicycle parking should be repurposed to address the more challenging barriers to biking as indicated by survey respondents.

Appendix C – Ithaca Carshare Membership Analysis

Results from the downtown survey indicated that very few respondents used Ithaca Carshare. By using membership data provided by the service, we can determine the full extent of Carshare’s downtown members, past and present.

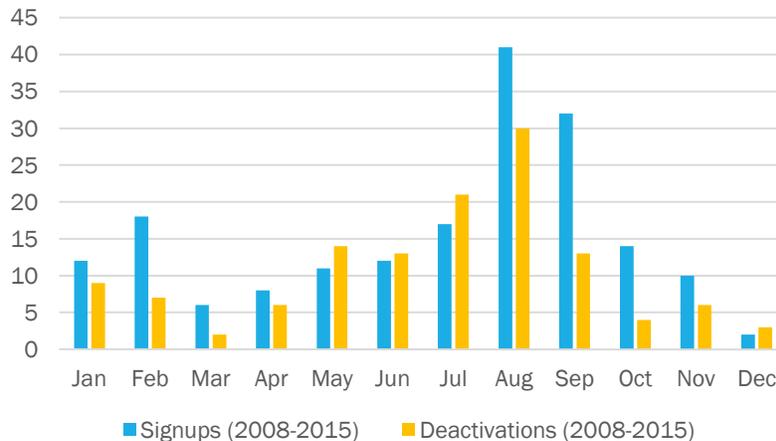
Affiliations of Active Downtown Carshare Members



At the time the Carshare data was provided (November 2, 2015), **there were 55 active downtown members in the Carshare system.** Cornell-affiliates, especially Cornell staff, are overrepresented within Carshare’s membership when compared with the [occupation of residents](#). This may be a result of the membership incentives given by Cornell as well as members’ choice to live a car-free lifestyle. However, at 55 active members, **Carshare members constitute around 5% of the downtown resident population.**

Given the high share of Cornell students within Ithaca Carshare’s membership, it is expected that turnover is high. **Signups and deactivations for Ithaca Carshare coincide with the academic year.** Most signups for Ithaca Carshare occur during the August-September move-in period, and most deactivations pick up starting in May.

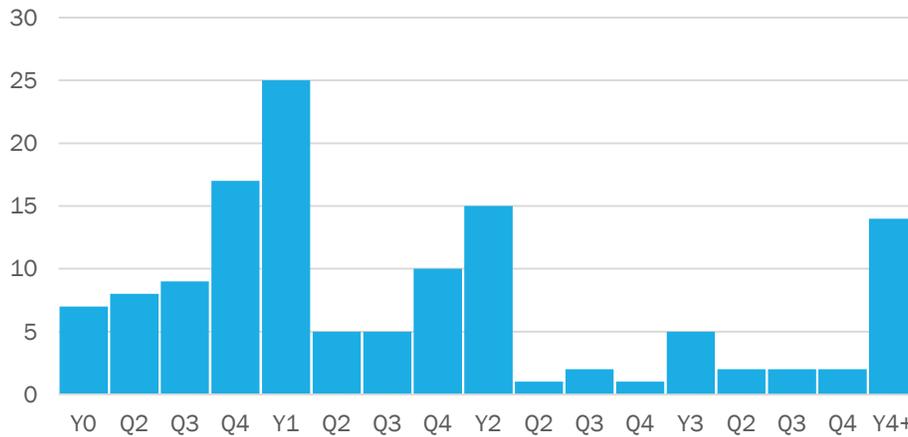
Downtown Carshare Signups and Deactivations



Another way of looking at Carshare membership turnover is the average length of membership of the accounts that have been deactivated. While the average length of a deactivated account is 20 months, **the median membership length is 13 months** (i.e. half of all members in the downtown quit within 13 months after they sign up). Given the fact that most Cornell students in the downtown are graduate students, it is probable that **most members sign up after spending a year in Ithaca without being a Carshare member**, possibly after finding difficulties living without access to a car for a year. An alternate theory may be that members may be mostly undergraduate students who sign up during

their final year, when they turn 21 and when insurance requirements for Ithaca Carshare are less stringent. Regardless, memberships are generally deactivated by members in 12-month cycles.

Membership Length of Deactivated Downtown Carshare Accounts



Potential For Improvement

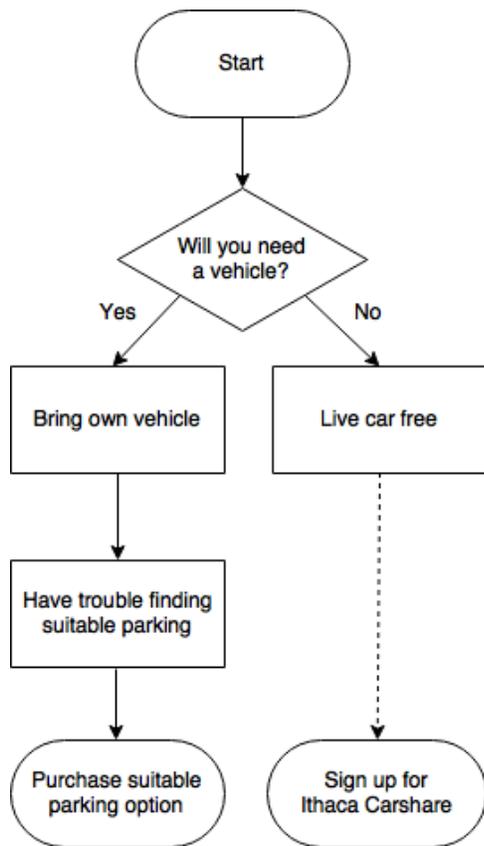
On average, Ithaca Carshare registers 23 downtown applicants every year, with about 9 registering during move-in season. These applicants amount to less than 5% of new movers, and about 10% of new movers without vehicles. Targeted marketing to reach these individuals may increase the share of Carshare membership in downtown Ithaca.

Incentives for Ithaca Carshare should bring the cost of entry down. The impact of free memberships can be seen within the Cornell student members, where the Just In Case plan does not charge a monthly fee for membership even though the cost for using the car is higher. The Just In Case plan also works better for infrequent drivers, which makes it more suitable for the once-a-week grocery or general shopping trip which is not easily accomplished via other modes.

Affiliation	Easy Access	Just In Case	It's My Car
Community	4	8	6
Ithaca College			1
Cornell Staff		4	7
Cornell Student		20	5

Registering members upon arrival in Ithaca or even earlier would lengthen the average membership time and potentially reduce car ownership. When presented with the costs of car ownership specific to downtown Ithaca, and the car-free and car-light lifestyle most downtown residents live, new residents may be convinced to leave their vehicles at home and live car-free while they stay in Ithaca. Ithaca Carshare, which is currently being marketed as a supplement to other modes, should also be marketed as the car you have while you're in Ithaca (*your Ithacar*). The next page shows a TDM intervention that could encourage new signups for Ithaca Carshare in the context of the transportation challenges a prospective downtown Ithaca resident may face.

Before TDM Intervention



After TDM Intervention

