RIDESHARING BENEFITS

There are many benefits to ridesharing, some more obvious than others. If you are not sure if ridesharing is for you, consider the following.

Ridesharing can save you money!

Simply put when you carpool, you will drive less and save money. These savings come from reduced maintenance costs (e.g., less frequent oil and air filter changes), savings on gasoline, and some insurance companies offer carpoolers reduced auto insurance rates. In their "Your Driving Costs 2003" brochure, the American Automobile Association estimates it costs the average driver 45 cents a mile for maintenance, insurance, license, registration, depreciation, finance charges and taxes. For a car getting 22 miles per gallon and with gasoline costing $2.10 per gallon, Long Island Transportation Management (LITM) estimates it costs a person driving alone to work approximately 54.5 cents a mile for a 50-mile roundtrip commute. If two people living nearby were to ride together on the 50-mile round trip commute each day and split the driving, each would save more than $3400 in commuting costs over the course of a year. To calculate your commuting costs visit the LITM Real Cost Calculator.

Ridesharing can help to improve air quality!

Automobiles and light trucks are considered the largest contributors to air quality problems in the United States. According to 1998 EPA estimates, passenger cars and light trucks accounted for 27% of total hydrocarbon emissions, 51% of the nation's carbon monoxide (CO) emissions, 20% of the total nitrogen oxide (NO_x) emissions and 18% of nation wide carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions. With the exception of CO_2, these pollutants are products of incomplete combustion of gasoline or diesel fuels.

Hydrocarbons react with nitrogen oxides in the presences of sunlight and sustained elevated temperatures to produce ground level ozone. Ground level ozone, a major component of photochemical smog, contributes to respiratory problems such as coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath. Sustained exposure to high ozone levels can lead to permanent lung damage. Young children, the elderly, and people with pre-existing respiratory ailments are most susceptible to respiratory affects from exposure to ozone. Oxides of nitrogen also contribute to the formation of acid rain while carbon monoxide exposure can impair mental function and visual perception.

Carbon dioxide is one of several greenhouse gases that scientists now believe contribute to the climatic phenomena called global warming. Greenhouses gases are defined as any gas that absorbs infrared radiation in the atmosphere. Greenhouse gases include water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), halogenated fluorocarbons (HCFCs), ozone (O_3), perfluorinated carbons (PFCs), and hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

According to EPA, based on global warming potentials, carbon dioxide accounts for over 80 percent of total greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. In

1997, transportation sources accounted for approximately 31 percent of carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel combustion (or 460.4 million metric tons of carbon dioxide) in the United States.

Ridesharing helps to reduce the number of vehicles on the road and as a consequence pollution to the atmospheres from vehicles is reduced.
The table below shows the emissions produced by the average passenger car and light truck on the road in 1997 according to EPA estimates.

Annual Emissions
for the
"Average" Passenger Car and Light Truck

	Pollutant	Emission Factor (grams/mile)	Annual Emissions (lbs) [1]
Passenger Car	Hydrocarbons	2.9	77
	Carbon Monoxide	22.0	582
	Nitrogen Oxides	1.5	40
	Carbon Dioxide	363.2	9,600
Light Truck [2]	Hydrocarbons	3.7	98
	Carbon Monoxide	29.0	767
	Nitrogen Oxides	1.9	50
	Carbon Dioxide	544.8	14,400

[1]Emissions estimates presume average annual mileage of 12,000.
[2]Light trucks include pickups, vans, minivans, and sports-utility vehicles.

Ridesharing conserves non-renewable energy resources!

Two-thirds of the oil used in the United States is used to power transportation vehicles and half is consumed by passenger cars and light trucks according to DOE estimates. In 2001, 55 percent of the oil used in the US was imported. This level of dependence on imports is the highest in our history, and will increase as we use up domestic resources.

According to US 1995 DOT/FHA Highway Statistics, the average passenger car had a fuel economy rating of 22.5 miles per gallon while the average light truck was at 15.3 miles per gallon. With many Americans purchasing less fuel efficient sports-utility vehicles over the last several years, the average fuel economy of vehicles has not increased. Assuming a 50-mile round trip commute, two persons ridesharing five days per week would save 533 gallons of gas if the vehicle taken off the road was a passenger car, and 784 gallons would be conserved if the vehicle removed from the road was a light truck.

Ridesharing might save you some time?

If your commute is a long one, say from Nassau County or Queens, you may find yourself frequently fighting heavy traffic on the LIE. If you rideshare, you can use the High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane on the expressway.