ALAMEDA COUNTY
CONGESTION MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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May 11, 2009
Agenda Item 3.1

Memorandum

Date: April 29, 2009

To: Plans and Programs Committee

From: Diane Stark, Senior Transportation Planner

Subject: Congestion Management Program: Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Evaluation

Action Requested
It is recommended that the Board accept the 2008 Annual Evaluation Report for the Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Program and approve the recommendations for next year's program. The Executive Summary is attached and the draft Evaluation Report is available on the CMA website. It is recommended that next year, the program: 1) continue operations and marketing, including maintaining a website and conducting employee and employer surveys, 2) continue monitoring and marketing the 50+ mile rental car requirement, 3) focus on registering businesses in South and Central Alameda County, and 4) incorporate recommendations from the GRH Program Evaluation, which was approved by the Board at is February meeting, into the Annual Evaluation Report.

Next Steps
Submit report to the CMA Board for acceptance at its May meeting, and finalize and distribute the 2008 Program Evaluation Report.

Discussion
Background
The Guaranteed Ride Home Program is a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategy that encourages people to take alternative modes of transportation to work. It is the only TDM strategy that CMA is currently undertaking to meet the State requirements in the Congestion Management Program (CMP). It also contributes towards the CMA's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, as required by recent state legislation, SB 375 and AB 32.

Goal of Program
The purpose of the program is to provide a ride home to registered employees in cases of emergency or unscheduled overtime on days the employee has used an alternative mode of transportation to go to work other than driving alone. Alternative modes include carpools, vanpools, transit, walking or bicycling. By encouraging use of alternative modes, it results in a reduction in the number of single occupancy vehicle trips taken. Based on this objective, the program can be considered a success, as discussed below.

Results of Annual Survey and Evaluation
The Draft Annual Evaluation Report presents the results of the 2008 evaluation of the program's administrative functions, statistics on employer and employee participation and trips taken, data from the

annual survey of participating employees and employers, and recommendations for program enhancements.

Highlights from the 2008 program are presented below:

- 4,327 people were registered in the program;
- # of annual drive-alone trips replaced by alternative modes for enrollees in the program:
    - 363,381 one-way trips per year (based on the number of people enrolled in the program and the number of trips each person would have taken for the year without the GRH program)
    - or 181,691 round-trips per year;
- # Guaranteed Ride Home rides taken per year: 119 one way cab or car rental rides;
- # Rides not taken due to enrollment in GRH program: 181,571 (or 181,691 round-trip rides minus 119 GRH trips taken),
- Annual Program Cost: $135,000
- Annual miles saved per work year (250 days): 10,895,068
- Annual gallons of gas saved per work year (250 days): 482,083
- Annual dollars not spent on gas per work year (250 days): $1,793,917 (based on average price of $3.72 per gallon in 2008)

Program Recommendations

The status of recommendations for Program enhancements in 2008 and recommendations for 2009 are summarized below:

2008 Program Changes

Following is a report of progress made in program changes that the CMA Board recommended in 2007 for 2008:

1. Conduct an independent review of the GRH Program

An independent review of the GRH program was conducted in 2008. The review compared CMA's GRH program to other programs and researched alternative funding strategies for the program. The results were presented to, and approved by the CMA Board in February 2009. Based on the results, the Board made the following recommended changes to the program for 2009:

- Continue to rely on TFCA grants to fund the GRH Program for now,
- Investigate implementing a regional GRH Program with MTC and all nine counties in the region,
- Expand the GRH Program in Alameda County into a comprehensive TDM Program (pending new funding).
- Investigate requiring employers to contribute up to 50 percent towards the cost of the program and/or a $10 to $20 co-payment per employee (after certain conditions are in place), and
- Eliminate the minimum number of 75 employees per employer requirement.

These recommendations will be undertaken with the GRH program in 2009 pending the Air District approval of TFCA funding and are discussed below.

2. Initiate a pilot program with one or two Transportation Management Associations

The GRH program initiated a pilot program with the Downtown Berkeley Association and the Emeryville TMA. As a result, 39 businesses registered from the two associations, accounting for 70% of all new business participants in 2008. Furthermore, 137 new employee participants registered, accounting for approximately 20% of all new 2008 participants. Participants in these two districts took zero rides in 2008.

3. *Focus marketing of rental car requirement for non-emergency trips over 50 miles to major employers*
The GRH program staff targeted marketing of the car rental requirement to the 12 employers with the most registered employees in the program. Additionally, they updated program materials and included information in the annual employer and employee surveys reminding all registered employees of the car rental requirement for non-emergency trips over 50 miles. Since rental cars cost less than taxi cabs, increasing their use would reduce the cost of rides for the program. While rental car usage is the highest since the program was initiated, the number of rental car trips taken by employees of the largest employers reduced slightly compared to 2007. This could have been because some of the employees of the major employers work alternative shifts when car rentals may not be available. Furthermore, some of the rides were for emergency purposes, for which rental cars are not required. Overall, the use of car rentals saved the program $1,446 in 2008, even with the slight decrease in use by employees of the major employers.

4. *Develop and implement a pilot carshare program in Oakland and Emeryville*
The GRH program staff met with ZipCar and City Carshare to investigate options to offer carshare vehicles for the program. Carshare vehicles would be a convenient and cost effective option to taking rides with taxi cabs and car rentals. Carshare vehicles are available when car rental companies are closed, and their cost is less than a taxicab. However, neither carshare company was interested in pursuing this arrangement at this time. They were concerned with contract, liability, and invoicing requirements, as well as the low number of potential carshare rides. This option should continue to be monitored in the event that program or carshare conditions change.

Program Recommendations for 2009

1. *Continue operations and marketing, including maintaining a website and conducting annual employee and employer surveys*
To ensure ongoing success of the GRH program, operations of the GRH program should continue. This includes database maintenance, general marketing, and maintaining the website. Annual employee and employer surveys should also be completed as part of the annual program evaluation report.

2. *Continue monitoring and marketing the 50+ mile rental car requirement*
GRH staff should continue monitoring and marketing the requirement to take non-emergency rides greater than 50 miles with rental cars. Marketing should be focused on informing new employers and employees about the requirement. This should include continuing to telephone and e-mail participants who use the program and live over 50 miles from their workplace to remind them of the program requirement and attach reminders to all vouchers about the requirement.

3. *Focus on registering businesses in South and Central Alameda County.*

Although the program has been broadly marketed to all jurisdictions within Alameda County, the North and East County cities such as Pleasanton, Oakland, Berkeley, and Emeryville represent over 80% of all registered GRH businesses. In order to create more program equity across Alameda County and increase participation in South and Central Alameda County, the GRH Program should focus marketing efforts on employers in these areas in 2009. By working with Chambers of Commerce and business associations in South and Central County cities, the GRH Program should attempt to increase awareness and participation in these areas.

4. *Incorporate Board recommendations made in February 2009*

In February 2009, after reviewing the independent program evaluation, the CMA Board approved the following program changes to be implemented in 2009:

- *Implement and Market the Zero Minimum Employee per Employer Requirement.*

The Board made the recommendation to eliminate the employer size requirement and open the program to any employer in the county, regardless of size based on the results of the comprehensive program evaluation. The evaluation found that compared to 11 GRH programs nationwide, only the CMA program had a minimum number of employees per employer requirement. Based on our experience with increased enrollment and zero rides with the Emeryville TMA and DBA, it is not anticipated that the change would have a large impact on program administration. Furthermore, eliminating the employee requirement may not greatly expand the number of businesses and employees enrolled in the program or the number of rides taken since smaller businesses often are not able to dedicate staff to market and administer the GRH program internally. GRH staff should work with Chambers of Commerce and create press releases to advertise the change in the program and continue to form partnerships with TMAs and business associations to more effectively market the program to all employers regardless of size.

- *Investigate implementing a regional GRH Program with MTC and all nine counties in the region*

The CMA Board recommended that the CMA work with MTC to investigate initiating a regionwide GRH program. This has the potential of reducing total indirect costs--such as administration, marketing and overhead--across the merged programs. CMA staff has contacted the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to discuss interest in assuming operations of the GRH Program, and is scheduling to meet with MTC and the Bay Area counties to discuss their interest this option. Should a regionwide program be developed, the eligibility circumstances for rides and reimbursable expenses should be consistent with other GRH programs in the Bay Area.

- *Expand the GRH Program in Alameda County into a comprehensive TDM Program (pending new funding).*

The CMA GRH Program is the only reviewed program that does not include other transportation demand management (TDM) programs. Including the GRH program as part of a comprehensive TDM program would result in economies of scale for marketing and administration. A package of TDM options is being considered as part of the Climate Change efforts the CMA is pursuing to address greenhouse gas emissions requirements through AB 32 and SB 375. The GRH Program, whether in Alameda County or regionwide, should be considered part of these efforts.

- *Investigate requiring employers to contribute toward the cost of the GRH Program.*

The GRH program has been funded by the Air District TFCA funds since 1998. To diversify program funding and address the CMA Board's concerns about having employers contribute towards the cost of their employees reducing congestion and air emissions, the CMA Board recommended investigating methods of introducing employer contributions into the program.

Because the program has been offered without a fee since inception, even a minimal charge to employers could lead to employer attrition in the program. As recommended by the CMA Board in February 2009, the 2008 employer survey asked whether employers would be willing to contribute financially to the program and how much. Survey results showed that employers would generally be unwilling to pay for the program with 83% of respondents stating that their employer would be "unlikely" or "very unlikely" to participate if an annual fee of $250-$1,000 was levied per employer and 64% responding that their employer would be "unlikely" or "very unlikely" to participate in the program if the program charged $10-$20 annually per registered employee or any amount. The high negative response rate may be partially due to the current state of the economy. The survey asked respondents if their companies

offered additional commuter benefits to employees. Most employers (76%) reported that they provide other transportation subsidy programs besides the GRH Program, such as Commuter Checks and bicycle parking. This indicates that the employers are interested in providing commuter benefits, and that, if offered a broader TDM program or other incentives, may be willing to contribute toward the program.

This recommendation to investigate employer contribution into the program should be coordinated with efforts to work with MTC and the counties to provide a regional GRH or TDM program. It should also be considered as part of CMA's efforts to investigate options for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in response to AB 32 and SB 375.

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Alameda County
Congestion Management Agency

ALAMEDA COUNTY CMA
GUARANTEED
RIDE
HOME

2008 Program Evaluation Executive Summary

DRAFT

APRIL 2009

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA) Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Program has been in operation since April 9, 1998. This report presents the results of the 2008 Program Evaluation and covers program operations during the 2008 calendar year including a comparison with previous years. The evaluation provides information about:

1. The effectiveness of the program's administration;
2. Statistics on employer and employee participation and rides taken;
3. The program's success in causing an increase in the use of alternative modes; and
4. The status of Board recommendations made for 2008 and proposed recommendations for 2009.

Program Description

The Alameda County CMA Guaranteed Ride Home Program is sponsored by the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (ACCMA) and is funded with Transportation Funds for Clean Air (TFCA) from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD).

The GRH Program provides a "guaranteed ride home" to any registered employee working for a participating employer in cases of emergency on days the employee has used an alternative mode of transportation to get to work. Alternative modes include: carpools, vanpools, bus, train, ferry, walking and bicycling. Participating employers must have at least 75 employees at worksites located in Alameda County. As of December 31, 2008, 188 employers and 4,327 employees were registered with the program.

The objective of the program is to maximize modal shift from driving alone to commute alternatives including transit, carpools, vanpools, bicycling and walking. Based on this stated objective, the program can be considered a success. Each year of operation, the program has seen an increase in the number of participants who use alternative modes and an increase in the frequency with which they use alternative modes. Figure ES-1 displays the estimated reduction in drive alone trips per work week.

Historical Trends

The Guaranteed Ride Home Program began as a demonstration program in 1998. Over the course of the last 11 years, GRH has grown into a smoothly operating program with 188 registered employers, over 4,300 registered employees, and has provided almost 1,400 rides.

Figure ES-1 illustrates some key historical trends for the Guaranteed Ride Home Program.

Figure ES-1 Guaranteed Ride Home Program Historical Trends

Trend	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Program Participants											
Total Number of Employers	72	100	119	132	127	110	120	131	142	155	188
New Employers Registered	72	28	19	13	12	14	16	22	12	18	56
Total Number of Employees	880	1,674	2,265	2,759	2,664	2,785	3,268	3,638	4,107	4,437	4,327
New Employees Registered	880	794	591	494	525	710	543	603	550	514	722
Trip Statistics											
Total Number of Rides Taken	57	156	168	149	145	151	143	87	107	98	119
Total Number of Rental Car Rides	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	8	10	18	9	18	18	23
Total Number of Taxi Rides	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	137	141	125	78	89	80	96
Average Rides per Month	6.3	13	14	12.3	12	12.4	11.8	6.8	8.9	8.2	9.9
Average Trip Distance (miles)	28.7	34.96	36.9	42.1	42.02	42.9	39.8	42.6	41.8	41.6	39.4
Average Ride Cost	$54.51	$65.25	$70.45	$84.02	$88.18	$93.64	$80.92	$87.78	$89.48	$86.13	$90.49
Rental Car Savings	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	$421	$759	$1,015	$442	$1,221	$1,316	$1,446
Number of potential rides per year	5,280	10,044	13,590	16,554	15,984	16,710	19,608	21,828	24,642	26,622	25,962
Percent of potential rides taken each year	1.08%	1.55%	1.24%	0.90%	0.91%	0.90%	0.73%	0.40%	0.43%	0.37%	0.46%
Survey Results											
Number of Surveys Collected	215	350	270	346	517	619	658	716	732	728	822
Survey Response Rate	N/A	21%	12%	13%	19%	22%	20%	20%	18%	16%	19%
Percent who, without GRH, Would Not Use an Alternative Mode or Would Use One Less Frequently	15%	16%	19%	19%	34%	41%	47%	46%	40%	41%	35%
Increase in the Percent of Those Using Alternative Modes Four or More Times a Week	N/A	10%	15%	8%	15%	17%	14%	21%	19%	18%	28%
Number of Single Occupancy Vehicle Trips Reduced per Week	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3,768	3,946	3,774	3,318	3,709	3,499	3,635

Seventy-two (72) employers registered with the program during the initial six-month demonstration period. In 2008, 56 employers registered for the GRH Program, triple the number registered in 2007 and the largest number of registrants since the initial demonstration period in 1998. A total of 283 employers have registered with the program since its inception. Due to employers moving, going out of business, etc. the program currently has 188 active participating employers.

During the initial six-month demonstration period, 880 employees joined the Guaranteed Ride Home Program. In 2008, 722 new employees registered, 40% more than registered in 2007 and the highest number of registrants since 1999. The large increase in the number of registrants can be attributed to the program's partnership with the Emeryville Transportation Management Association (TMA) and the Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA) as well as record high gas prices in 2008 which led to more commuters seeking alternative transportation modes. Approximately 6,900 employees have registered with the program since its inception. The program now has 4,327 actively registered employees.

Despite experiencing the highest number of employee registrants since 1999, the overall number of registered employees dropped approximately 2.5% in 2008 compared to 2007. Due to the current economic conditions, many employers went out of business or downsized in 2008 such as the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, Mervyns, and Farmers Insurance, all larger GRH employer participants.

Based on the fact that each registered participant may take up to six rides in a one-year period, the rate that guaranteed rides are taken is very low. Most program participants take a guaranteed ride home very infrequently or not at all. For example, at the end of 2008, there were a total of 25,962 potential rides based on a total enrollment of 4,327 employees. However, only 119 rides were actually taken (approximately 0.46% of potential rides).

A total of 1,380 rides have been provided from the time of the program's inception through the end of 2008. During the 2008 operating year, 119 rides were taken, a 21% increase from 2008. As shown in Figure ES-1, the total number of rides taken per year can fluctuate significantly. It is unknown why the number of rides taken in 2008 increased 21%. Of the 6,896 employees ever registered for the program, at the end of 2008, 6,226 (90%) had never taken a ride. The vast majority of those who have used the program (80%) have only taken one or two rides. This demonstrates that participants see the GRH Program as an "insurance" policy and do not abuse the program or take more rides per year than they need. The program is available if and when an emergency or unscheduled overtime arises and provides participants with peace of mind knowing that even when they do not drive alone, they can get home under unexpected circumstances.

Major Findings of the Evaluation

The program evaluation consisted of an examination of the program's administrative functions, statistics on employer and employee participation and use, data from the surveys of participating employees, and recommendations for program changes and enhancements. The following sections present the major findings from the evaluation.

Program Administration

Program Operating Principles

- The use limitation of six rides per year continues to be appropriate. Very few program participants have reached the limit since the program's inception. Only one participant in 2008 reached the six trip limit.
- The rental car demonstration program was successfully implemented in October 2002 in the Tri-Valley area (Dublin, Livermore and Pleasanton), and county-wide in April 2004. A new policy went into effect in 2006 requiring participants to use a rental car for any non-emergency trip over 50 miles. Rental car use accounted for 19% of all 2008 rides. The program realized an estimated savings of approximately $1,450 on ride costs in 2008.

Marketing and Promotions

- Approximately 20% of program resources are dedicated to marketing and promotion. This time is spent marketing both to employers and their employees in the form of making calls, distributing flyers, and giving presentations and attending events. The program has sought to leverage these resources by relying on participating employers to promote the GRH Program internally, and by seeking co-marketing opportunities with local transit agencies and with organizations that promote commute alternatives such as MTC and local business districts like the Hacienda Business Park.
- In 2008, the GRH Program focused marketing efforts on the Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA) and the Emeryville Transportation Management Association (TMA). Both organizations entered into an informal agreement with the GRH Program to allow all businesses in their jurisdictions to enroll in the program regardless of the number of employees because as a whole, the DBA and Emeryville TMA employ well over the minimum 75 employee requirement. As a result of marketing efforts, 39 new businesses enrolled from these two business districts[1] and 137 new participants enrolled.
- The program also enrolled eight employers countywide with between 75-99 employees who are not members of the DBA or Emeryville TMA. A majority of these businesses reported finding out about the program as part of the InfoUSA mass mailer program staff sent out in late 2007.
- The availability of the marketing materials in electronic format via the internet or email upon request continues to be a useful and inexpensive tool for promoting the program.
- The website is updated to include changes in the program, such as the rental car program, and to clarify the program, as necessary, such as providing a clear description of the instant enrollment program.

[1] Three businesses have since gone out of business.

Employer and Employee Participation

Employer and Employee Registrations

- Both the number of new employers and new employees surged in 2008 due in large part to our partnerships with the DBA and Emeryville TMA and record gas prices which created increased interest in alternative mode use. A total of 56 new businesses registered for the program, more than triple the number registered in 2007 and the most new registrants since 1998. A total of 722 employees registered for the program in 2008, 40% more than 2007 and the highest number of new employees since 1999.
- Despite high enrollment activity, the total number of registered participants in the program decreased by over 2% since the previous year. According to employer contacts, the decrease is due to the downturn in the economy and company downsizing.
- North and east Alameda County continue to be the areas with the most employers enrolled in the program. These areas account for 80% of all registered businesses. This can be attributed to our partnerships with the Hacienda Business Park in Pleasanton, the Emeryville TMA in Emeryville, and the DBA in Berkeley and the large concentration of employers in Downtown Oakland.

Rides Taken

- From the program's inception in 1998 through 2008, a total of 1,380 rides (1,276 taxi rides and 104 rental car rides) have been taken. A total of 119 rides were taken during the 2008 calendar year for an average of approximately 10 rides per month. The number of rides taken in 2008 represented a 21% increase over last year's total.
- Ninety percent of the employees enrolled have never taken a trip. This demonstrates the "insurance" nature of the program and shows that participants do not abuse the program. Of the employees who have taken a trip since the program inception (1998), 80% have taken only one or two rides.
- The two most common reasons to take a guaranteed ride home in 2008 were "personal illness" (33% of rides) and "unscheduled overtime" (26%).
- Those who carpool or vanpool are more likely to use a guaranteed ride home trip than those who use other alternative commute modes. Sixty-one percent of guaranteed rides home were used by car- and vanpoolers.
- The average trip distance continued to decline in 2008. The average trip distance for all rides in 2008 was 39.4 miles, a 5% mile decrease from last year. The average taxi trip distance declined 3% to 37.9 miles and the average rental car trip distance decreased 12% to approximately 46 miles.
- The average taxi trip cost increased 7% in 2008 to $98.80. Friendly Cab, serving Oakland, Berkeley, and Emeryville, provides a majority of the GRH rides. They raised their rates approximately 8% in 2008 due to record high gas prices, which led to the cost increase.
- The cost of a rental car trip is $55.00. It is estimated that the use of rental cars in 2008 saved $1,446 in trip costs. Rental car usage was up 1% in 2008.

Employee Commute Patterns

- The most common trip-origin cities are Oakland, Pleasanton, and Fremont. The most common trip-destination cities are Oakland, Manteca, and Modesto.
- The most common trip destination county is Alameda County, followed by San Joaquin County and Contra Costa County.

Employee Survey

The 2008 survey was distributed and completed primarily online. We attempted to contact all employer representatives (some were non-responsive despite repeated attempts) to request their assistance with the distribution of the survey. When employers were not available to distribute the survey and by special request, we contacted employees directly with the survey. Of the 4,327 employees currently enrolled in the program, 822 completed the survey, a 19% response rate. Of the surveys, 96% were completed online. Survey respondents represent 83 (out of 188) different participating employers.

Use of Alternative Modes

The Guaranteed Ride Home Program continues to be successful in encouraging the use of alternative modes. According to 2008 survey responses:

- When asked how important GRH was in their decision to stop driving alone, 65% of respondents who used to drive alone said that it was at least somewhat important.
- Ninety-three percent of respondents stated that they think that the GRH Program encourages people to use alternative modes more often. Only 58% of respondents, however, stated that the program encourages them personally to use alternative modes more often.
- If the GRH Program were not available, the majority (65%) reported that they would continue to use an alternative mode at the same frequency that they currently do.
- Survey results suggest that the program may have helped encourage participants to try alternative modes and now that they are in the habit of using alternative modes, they would continue using them even if the program became unavailable.
- The survey asked respondents how they traveled to work at present and before they registered for the GRH Program. Both before and after the program, the most common modes were driving alone, BART and bus. Drive alone rides, however, declined after registering with the GRH Program, while alternative mode use increased.
- Using these survey findings, we were able to extrapolate the impact of the program on travel behavior of all participants. The program reduces an estimated 3,635 single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips per week.

Other Commute Characteristics

- Commute distances of program participants are generally 50 miles or less (87%).
- Most program participants travel to work during the peak commute hours of 7-9 AM in the mornings (66%) and 4-6 PM in the evenings (70%).

Customer Service Ratings

The annual evaluation survey includes two questions to evaluate participant's level of satisfaction with the customer service provided in the program. Additional information on service satisfaction is collected in the survey that participants return after they have taken a ride.

- The administrative functions of the GRH Program continue to receive very high ratings for the quality of customer service, consistent with previous years' evaluations.
- Passengers were very positive in their evaluation of the transportation services provided through GRH with over 90% of users rating the services as "excellent" or "good", a 10% increase from 2007.

Program Value

This year's survey asked participants how much they value the GRH Program compared to other transportation benefits they receive.

- Sixty-seven percent reported that the program was as valuable as or more valuable than other transportation benefits. Twelve percent reported that they receive no other transportation benefits.

Employer Survey

In addition to employee participants, employer representatives are also surveyed annually. Of the 188 employers currently enrolled in the program, 69 surveys were completed, resulting in a 37% response rate. New questions were added to the employer survey this year asking how much employers would be willing to pay towards the program. The results are summarized under "Program Value," below.

Use of Alternative Modes

- The survey asked the employer representatives how important the program is in encouraging employees to use alternative commute modes more often. A large majority (85%) reported that they feel participation in the program at least some what encourages more alternative mode use[2].
- The survey asked respondents if their companies offered additional commuter benefits to employees. Most employers (76%) reported that they provide other transportation subsidy programs besides the GRH Program. The most popular benefits were Commuter Checks and bicycle parking.

Program Management

- The survey asked respondents how long they have managed the program for their company. Only 57% of respondents have been with GRH for one or more years, compared with 67% in 2007 and 85% in 2006. When GRH staff contacted the employer representatives this year, GRH staff encountered a large number of employers who had experienced employer representative turnover.
- When asked about the workload that GRH presents, all employers reported that their workload was "manageable" or the program is "not much work".

[2] Employers were asked for their opinion regarding if the GRH Program encourages employees to use alternative commute modes more often. Employers did not take a poll or individual survey of their registered employees.

- One of the important features of the program is the instant enrollment voucher which allows persons not registered in the program to become instantly enrolled and receive a guaranteed ride home in case of emergencies. Ninety percent of employer representatives stated that they have never issued an instant enrollment voucher. The large percentage may be due to the turnover in employer representatives.

Customer Service Ratings

The survey includes two questions to evaluate the employer representatives' level of satisfaction with the customer service provided in the program in 2008.

- "Clarity of information" provided by program staff received very high ratings, with 94% of respondents stating that information was "excellent" or "good". When asked about the hotline assistance[3] they received in 2008, 50% of the respondents stated that they received "good" or "excellent" service and 50% reported that they "did not know". No employers reported receiving "fair" or "poor" service via telephone.

Rental Car Awareness

Starting in 2007, the annual survey started asking employer representatives about their awareness of the rental car requirement for rides over 50 miles.

- Over two-thirds (69%) of employer representatives stated that they were aware of the requirement. In 2007, less than half of employer representatives knew about the rental car requirement. This shows that the marketing outreach for the rental car requirement has worked to increase awareness.

Program Value

For the first year, the employer survey asked questions specifically about the value of the program and how much employers would be willing to pay to continue participation in the program.

- Fifty-five percent of respondents stated that they thought that their employees value the GRH Program as much as or more than other transportation benefits offered by their employer. Over a quarter of respondents stated that their employer does not offer any other transportation benefits.
- When asked how likely their employer would be to continue participation in the GRH Program if their employer was charged an annual fee of $250-$1,000 to participate in the program, 83% of respondents stated that their employers would be "unlikely" or "very unlikely" to continue participation. Respondents who stated that their employer would be "unlikely" or "very unlikely" to participate were asked how much their employers would be willing to contribute. Fifty-five percent responded that their employer would be unwilling to make any contribution to the program and 18% stated that their employers may be able to contribute between $50 and $150 annually for the program.
- Respondents were also asked if their employers would be willing to pay an annual fee of $10-$20 per registered participant in the program. This option was more popular with respondents with only 64% stating that their employers would be "unlikely" or "very unlikely" to continue participation. Respondents who stated that their employer would be

[3] GRH staff operates a telephone hotline weekdays from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM in order to provide information about the program to current and prospective employees and employers and to answer questions about the program. The hotline is not intended to respond to participant emergencies or provide 24-hour assistance.

"unlikely" or "very unlikely" to participate were asked how much their employers would be willing to contribute per registered employee. Sixty-five percent stated that their employers would be unwilling to make any contribution and 9% stated between $5-$10.

- The flat annual fee was more popular with larger employers while the pay-per-employee option was more popular with smaller employers with few or zero registrants.
- The lack of willingness to pay an annual fee was mostly attributed by employer representatives to the current state of the economy.

Program Savings

The Guaranteed Ride Home Program's goal is to reduce single occupancy vehicle commute trips through encouraging alternative transportation use. Based on the annual employee survey results, the program eliminated approximately 3,635 single-occupancy vehicle roundtrips per week or 1,454 one-way trips per weekday. Based on the average reported commute distance by GRH participants and the number of registered participants, the GRH Program eliminates approximately 10.9 million vehicle miles from roadways annually[4]. It is estimated that the program saved participants approximately $1.8 million annually on fuel expenses in 2008[5].

Figure ES-2 Estimated Program Savings

Category	2008 Savings
Drive Alone Roundtrips Reduced Per Week	3,635
Drive Alone One-Way Trips Reduced per Weekday	1,454
Annual miles saved per work year	10,895,068
Annual gallons of gas saved per work year	482,083
Annual dollars not spent on gas per work year	$ 1,793,917

[4] Based on 1,454 reported reduced weekday one-way trips by participants from the annual survey, 250 days in a work year, and the average reported commute distance of 29.97 miles

[5] Based on the calculated number of annual miles reduced, the annual US vehicle fuel economy reported by the US Bureau of Transportation Statistics (22.6 MPG), and the average Bay Area fuel price per gallon reported by MTC in 2008 ($3.721)

Program Update and Recommendations

The Alameda County CMA Guaranteed Ride Home Program has been successful in helping achieve the goal of bringing about a modal shift from driving alone to alternative transportation modes. Data from this year's participant survey indicate that the program is continuing to reduce the number of drive-alone trips made within the county by eliminating one of the significant barriers to alternative mode use – namely, the fear of being unable to return home in the event of an emergency.

Summary of 2008 Evaluation Report Recommendations

Last year, the CMA Board made recommendations (shown in Figure ES-3) for the 2008 GRH Program. In addition to the usual recommendations to continue program operations, the CMA Board recommended an independent review of the GRH Program be completed and that it include a plan to evaluate ways to transition employers from TFCA funding for rides to employers paying for rides for their registered employees.

The recommendations for the 2008 GRH Program and their outcomes are presented below.

Figure ES-3 Summary of 2008 Evaluation Report Recommendations

Recommendation	Outcome/Status
1. Continue operations and marketing, including maintaining website and conducting employee and employer surveys	GRH staff continually markets the program and updates the website. The employee and employer surveys for the 2008 program evaluation were completed in March 2009. Results are included in Chapters 4 and 5 of this report.
2. Monitor and market the 75-99 employee per employer requirement	In 2008, the GRH Program registered eight new employers employing between 75 and 99 employees. This represents 14% of total new businesses registered in 2008. As with last year, staff has continued to encounter difficulty enrolling smaller businesses. Larger employers often have transportation managers, transportation coordinators, or persons in charge of employee benefits programs that can easily be the GRH contact person and distribute information to employees. Small businesses often do not have dedicated transportation staff.

Recommendation	Outcome/Status
3. Monitor and market the 50+ mile car rental requirement	The total rental car usage rate increased slightly (1%) in 2008, accounting for 19% of all GRH trips. Rental usage has increased every year since 2005 and more rental car rides were used in 2008 than in any other previous year. For the second year in a row, all employers were reminded about the rental car requirement during our annual survey effort. Both the employee and the employer surveys included information about the rental car requirement and questions regarding the requirement. As a result of these efforts, rental car requirement awareness among employer representatives increased from 49% in 2007 to 69% in 2008. Of registered employees, awareness increased from 35% in 2007 to 47% in 2008. To continue our commitment to increasing awareness, participants living over 50 miles from their workplace who used a taxicab are contacted by telephone and email to remind the participant of the program requirement once the GRH Program receives their completed ride paperwork. All vouchers mailed to new participants also have a rental requirement reminder attached to them.
4. Continue to develop and implement a way to focus marketing of the rental car requirement on major employers.	GRH staff worked with the top 12 employers with the most registered users in the program to tailor rental car marketing efforts to their registered employees. Because taxicab trips are more expensive for longer trips, the GRH Program requires rental car usage with certain exceptions for participants commuting over 50 miles in order to reduce program costs. Employer contacts were asked how they thought the GRH Program could most effectively market the rental car requirement to participants. Most employers recommended a direct email reminder to participants. Other employers recommended placing a reminder in their company newsletter or on their company intranet. NUMMI recommended sending all participants a reminder postcard in the mail. All recommended marketing campaigns were completed with the help of the employer contacts by June 2008. Despite these efforts, the percentage of rental car rides taken for trips longer than 50 miles by our major employers declined in 2008 by 4%. This may be due to participants who have emergencies which require immediate rides and who cannot wait for a rental car. Also the largest user of trips over 50 miles was NUMMI. NUMMI employees do not work on traditional shifts which conform to Enterprise Rent-A-Car business hours. Overall rental car usage and awareness, however, increased in 2008.
5. Develop and implement a pilot carshare program in Oakland and Emeryville	CMA and GRH staff met with ZipCar and City Carshare to explore using carshare vehicles as a convenient and cost effective ride option. City Carshare did not express an interest in pursuing a contract with the CMA due to the low ride potential and invoicing requirements. With a larger presence in Oakland, Emeryville, and Berkeley than City Carshare, ZipCar was then contacted by CMA and GRH staff. Negotiations ended with ZipCar in November 2008 because the CMA and ZipCar could not agree on contract terms. ZipCar does not generally sign contracts with organizations and does not carry the level of insurance the CMA requires.

Recommendation	Outcome/Status
6. Initiate a pilot program with one or two Transportation Management Associations	In March 2008, staff met with the Emeryville TMA and Downtown Berkeley Association and developed an informal partnership with both associations. As a result of our partnerships and marketing, 39 businesses registered from the two associations, accounting for 70% of all new business participants in 2008, and 137 new employee participants registered, accounting for approximately 20% of all new 2008 participants. Participants in these two districts took zero rides in 2008.
7. Conduct an independent review of the GRH Program and develop a plan to evaluate ways to transition employers from TFCA funding for rides to the employers paying for rides for their registered employees within six months	In 2008, the CMA hired Eisen|Letunic Consulting to perform a third-party comprehensive program evaluation of the GRH Program. The comprehensive program evaluation concluded in 2009 and the ACCMA Board accepted the reports' major recommendations for the program. The following tiered recommendations were made: 1) Continue to rely on TFCA grants to fund the GRH Program for now, 2) Investigate implementing a regional GRH Program with MTC and all nine counties in the region, 3) Expand the GRH Program in Alameda County into a comprehensive TDM Program (pending new funding), 4) Investigate requiring employers to contribute up to 50 percent towards the cost of the program and/or a $10 to $20 co-payment per employee (after certain conditions are in place), and 5) Eliminate the minimum number of 75 employees per employer requirement. In regards to transitioning employers from TFCA funding, the report recommended that the CMA explore requiring employer contributions only if several conditions are in place. The criteria are: a determination that employers would not abandon the program in large numbers if they are required to pay, the existence of a comprehensive or more robust TDM program for employers through the ACCMA, and a stronger incentive for employers to provide commute alternative benefits for their employees. The 2008 Employer Survey included questions about willingness to contribute to the program. The Board recommended continued investigation of this issue in 2009.

The following provides a more detailed look at the above recommendations and results.

1. Continue operations and marketing, including maintaining website and conducting employee and employer surveys.

The Guaranteed Ride Home Program entered its tenth year of operations in 2008. The program added 56 new employers in 2008, triple the amount registered in 2007 and more than any other year except for 1998. A total of 722 new employee participants registered with the program, the highest number of new registrants since 1999 and 40% more than 2007. The large increase in registered businesses and employee participants can be attributed to our successful partnership with the Emeryville TMA and Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA) as well as record high gas prices which led to more commuters choosing alternative modes.

Staff continued to market the program to employees and employers via newsletters, emails, telephone calls, mailers, attendance of employee benefits fairs, etc. Employee and employer surveys are completed annually as part of the annual program evaluation report. The annual surveying effort for 2008 concluded in March 2009.

2. Continue to monitor and market the 75-99 employee requirement.

In order to offer a program that is inclusive for smaller businesses, in 2007, the GRH Program reduced the minimum number of employees per employer requirement from 100 to 75. The Board recommended monitoring the recommendation including program costs, the number of new employers, and new employees, to determine if reducing the employees per employer requirement would increase program costs. With the implementation of the recommendation in 2007, staff has completed marketing outreach efforts to encourage enrollment of companies with 75-99 employees. Although marketing efforts increased with the implementation of the recommendation, program costs have remained steady since 2007.

In 2008, eight new businesses with between 75-99 employees not associated with business parks or districts registered for the GRH Program. The table below shows all businesses registered with between 75-99 employees, the date of registration, and how they found out about the program.

Figure ES-4 New Employers with 75-99 Employees (2008)

Company Name	City	Registration Date	Number of Employees	Information Source
State Street California	Alameda	5 /16/2008	90	InfoUSA mailer
Commerce West Insurance	Pleasanton	6 /24/2008	80	InfoUSA mailer
Nanochip, Inc.	Fremont	2 /27/2008	80	N/A
AAA	Newark	6 /11/2008	78	InfoUSA mailer
Lonely Planet Publications	Oakland	7 /24/2008	75	Employee
Uncle Credit Union	Livermore	11/3 /2008	75	InfoUSA mailer
Clear Channel Outdoor	Oakland	5 /13/2008	75	InfoUSA mailer
Berry & Berry, A Professional Law Corp.	Oakland	5 /15/2008	75	InfoUSA mailer

Most of the new employers listed above registered as a result of the InfoUSA mailer distributed in late 2007. Marketing efforts completed in 2008 included mailing information to employers and contacting Chambers of Commerce in Berkeley, Pleasanton, Fremont, Hayward, San Leandro, Union City, and Newark. Chamber contacts were sent information about the program to review and distribute to employers. Staff encountered more difficulty registering these smaller employers than expected. Larger employers often have transportation managers, transportation coordinators, or persons in charge of employee benefits programs that can easily be the GRH contact person and distribute information to employees. Smaller businesses often do not have the resources or interest in supporting the GRH Program, especially if employees have not requested the benefit or if they have never heard of the program.

3. Continue to monitor and market the 50+ mile car rental requirement.

In order to reduce total funding spent on GRH trips and reduce program costs, the GRH countywide rental car program was launched in 2002. The rental car program requires that registrants who need a guaranteed ride home and who live more than 50 miles from their workplace use a rental car as their guaranteed ride home[6]. Rental car rides can be significantly cheaper for long distance trips because the program is only charged $55 per ride for the rental car instead of $2.40-$2.60 per mile in a taxicab.

As with the 2007 Evaluation Report, in order to efficiently contact employers and employees and concentrate our marketing efforts, GRH staff contacted all employers and employees as part of the 2008 evaluation in January and February 2009.

With the start of the 2008 employee and employer surveys, all employer contacts were contacted via telephone to update their contact information. Employer contacts were reminded of the rental car requirement as part of the telephone call. The 2008 employee and employer surveys were distributed primarily via email and included a brief explanation of the rental car requirement in the email and within the survey. Persons not providing the program with an email address were mailed the survey with a cover letter explaining the rental car requirement. The survey itself asked employer and employee participants questions about rental usage and understanding of the requirement. The complete results of these questions are presented in Chapters 4 and 5 and a brief summary is provided below.

All program literature has been updated to state that trips of 50 or more miles require the use of a rental car except in case of emergencies. Literature also states that persons living between 21 and 49 miles from their workplace are strongly encouraged to use a rental car. An insert is now included in all new participant packets for persons living more than 20 miles from their workplace, which reinforces the rental car requirement for persons living more than 50 miles from their workplace and encourages use of a rental car use for persons living over 20 miles from their workplace. Participants using their GRH voucher for a taxicab who live over 50 miles from their workplace are now contacted by telephone and email to remind the participant of the program requirement.

As a result of these efforts, the survey showed that rental car requirement awareness among employer representative respondents increased from 49% in 2007 to 69% in 2008. Of registered employees, awareness increased from 35% in 2007 to 47% in 2008. Rental car usage was up 1% in 2008 and accounted for 19.3% of trips. Participants used more rental car rides in 2008 than in any other previous year.

4. Continue to develop and implement a way to focus marketing of rental car requirement on major employers.

The 2006 Evaluation Report recommended targeting major employers to market the rental car requirement. Because the larger registered employers have more registrants, they also tend to use the highest number of rides per year. In an effort to reduce program costs, rental cars are required for non-emergency trips longer than 50 miles. Rental car rides can be significantly cheaper for long distance trips because the program is only charged $55 per ride for the rental car instead of $2.40-$2.60 per mile in a taxicab.

[6] Exceptions apply. See Chapter 2, page 2-3.

The 12 employers with the highest number of registrants (as of April 2008) were targeted by GRH staff. Employer contacts were asked how they thought we could most effectively market the rental car requirement to participants. Most thought that a direct email would be the most effective way to inform participants. Other employer contacts preferred newsletter articles and information on their internal company website. By the end of June 2008, the 12 employers with the highest number of participants were contacted and marketing campaigns were completed.

Figure ES-5 Rental Car Requirement Marketing Activities

Company Name	# of Registrants[7]	Action taken
Kaiser	1096	Employer contact emailed employees about the requirement. Email text created by GRH staff.
LLNL	387	Employer contact asked GRH staff to email participants directly.
NUMMI	296	Employer contact included a newsletter article in the May and June issues. A postcard reminder was mailed in June to all particpants' homes.
UC Berkeley	288	Employer contact asked GRH staff to email participants directly.
City of Oakland	204	Employer contact included a newsletter article in the May newsletter and on employee benefits page on the City's intranet.
Caltrans	165	Employer contact asked GRH staff to email participants directly.
Alameda County	145	Employer contact asked GRH staff to email participants directly.
Mervyns	126	Employer contact asked GRH staff to email participants directly.
Bayer	112	Employer contact sent an email to all registered participants.
AT&T	103	Employer contact asked GRH staff to email participants directly.
Safeway	83	Employer contact sent an email to all registered participants.
Farmers Insurance	64	Employer contact asked GRH staff to email participants directly.

Despite the targeted marketing effort on the larger employers, rental ride usage declined among the 12 top employers for GRH trips taken in 2008 that were over 50 miles. In 2007, 30% of the top 12 employer GRH trips taken that were over 50 miles were rental cars. In 2008, the percentage declined to 26%. This may be due to several factors. Participants are required to mark the reason for their guaranteed ride home but the program does not ask what the urgency

[7] Number of registrants at time of marketing effort, not as of December 31, 2008

of the matter is. If a participant's emergency requires that they leave work immediately and cannot wait for a rental car then the program allows participants to use a taxicab. The program does not know if in 2008 more emergencies required that participants leave work immediately. Also, NUMMI was the largest user of trips over 50 miles out of the top 12 employers in both 2007 and 2008. NUMMI employees work non-traditional shift hours which do not always conform to Enterprise Rent-A-Car business hours.

5. Develop and implement a pilot carshare program in Oakland and Emeryville.

The CMA Board recommended that staff develop and implement a pilot carshare program. The GRH Program strives to provide a convenient way home for persons in case of emergencies. More options in what type of ride home a participant can take would help encourage registration and the CMA's goal in reducing single occupancy vehicle trips. A carshare option would also provide a low cost alternative to taxicab rides for participants working after 5:30 PM when Enterprise Rent-a-Car is closed or for persons who need a guaranteed ride home immediately but are not able to wait for a cab or for Enterprise to drop off a rental car. As with rental cars, carsharing can be significantly cheaper than taxicabs for longer trips. Carsharing would add more convenience and options to participants and help meet the GRH Program's goal of reducing trip costs.

In order to develop a pilot carshare program, GRH and CMA staff contacted ZipCar and City Carshare. GRH and CMA staff met with ZipCar's manager of business development in April 2008. Staff thought ZipCar could be a good fit for the program because ZipCar has a large presence in Oakland, Emeryville, and Berkeley. Negotiations ended with ZipCar in November 2008 due to contracting issues. Most notably, ZipCar generally does not sign contracts nor provide adequate car insurance coverage per the CMA's requirements.

Negotiations with City Carshare ended with staff in June 2008. City Carshare decided not to pursue a contract with GRH due to the low ride potential in the East Bay and the program's invoicing requirements. The program requires monthly invoices that separate each ride by participant and include a voucher number for each ride. The City Carshare program could not accommodate a required voucher field on their website for participants taking a ride with the GRH Program. In addition, City Carshare would need to provide invoices to the program for trips instead of charging a pre-specified credit card. City Carshare's system could not accommodate these requirements.

6. Initiate a pilot program with one or two Transportation Management Associations.

In order to evaluate the cost effectiveness and staff resources needed to further reduce the eligibility requirement to include employers with less than 75 employees, GRH staff initiated two pilot programs with two business associations – the Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA) and the Emeryville Transportation Management Association (TMA). Both associations have expressed enthusiastic support for the program and are excited with having the GRH Program available to their businesses and employees. The Downtown Berkeley Association is comprised of approximately 500 businesses in Downtown Berkeley and the Emeryville TMA includes over 800 businesses within the City of Emeryville. While a large number of businesses in each association have less than 75 employees, the total number of employees in each association is well over the required 75 employee minimum.

In March 2008, GRH and ACCMA staff met with the executive directors of both organizations to review the program, outline the responsibilities of each association, and agree upon a marketing approach. Marketing activities began in April 2008 and included a general mailer to employers, emails to employers, newsletter articles, flyers, telephone calls, and site visits. As a result of the marketing campaigns, the GRH Program experienced its highest level of new employer registrants since the program's first year of operations. Twenty-two businesses registered from the DBA and 17 registered from the Emeryville TMA, accounting for 70% of all new businesses registered in 2008. A total of 137 new employee participants registered from these businesses, comprising 19% of all new employee registrants in 2008.

While the initial marketing campaigns and business registrations were time consuming, the increased enrollment activity did not significantly impact the amount of time required to operate the GRH Program. As a result, decreasing or eliminating the employee requirement does not appear to significantly increase amount of administrative time or program cost. Furthermore, the program evaluation study presented to the CMA Board in February 2009 reviewed 11 programs in the Bay Area and nationwide. None of the reviewed programs had a minimum number of employees per employer requirement (see Recommendation 7).

7. Conduct an independent review of the GRH Program and develop a plan to evaluate ways to transition employers from TFCA funding for rides to the employers paying for rides for their registered employees within six months.

CMA staff led the effort in 2008 to hire a consulting firm to perform a comprehensive program evaluation of the GRH Program. The program has been relatively unaltered for over 10 years and the CMA Board requested staff perform a review to provide a fresh look at the service and to ensure that it is being administered and operated as efficiently and effectively as possible and to explore alternative funding strategies.

The CMA hired Eisen|Letunic Consulting to perform the program review. The comprehensive program evaluation found that the GRH Program is the fourth most cost-effective program of the 42 programs evaluated and funded by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). The program also found that the cost of the GRH Program is in line with other reviewed GRH programs.

The CMA Board approved the review with the following recommendations:

- **Continue to rely exclusively on TFCA grants to fund the GRH Program for now.** As with other GRH programs in the Bay Area, the ACCMA program relies on TFCA grants to fund program operations. In the short term, the report recommends maintaining TFCA funding because the source has remained reliable and secure.
  - The report recommended that the CMA explore requiring employer contributions only if several conditions are in place. The criteria are: a determination that employers would not abandon the program in large numbers if they are required to pay, the existence of a comprehensive or more robust TDM program for employers through the ACCMA, and a stronger incentive for employers to provide commute alternative benefits for their employees. The 2008 Employer Survey included questions about willingness to contribute to the program. The Board recommended continued investigation of this issue in 2009.

- **Investigate implementing a regional GRH Program with MTC and all nine counties in the region.** This has the potential of reducing total indirect costs (such as administration, marketing and overhead) across the merged programs.
- **Expand the GRH Program in Alameda County into a comprehensive TDM Program (pending new funding).** The ACCMA GRH Program is the only reviewed program that does not include other transportation demand management (TDM) programs. The ACCMA may want to consider expanding their TDM efforts beyond the GRH Program and what is offered by 511 Bay Area. These could include: ridematching, financial incentives for carpooling and vanpooling, discounted transit passes, personalized transit itineraries, subsidized bicycle parking racks and lockers, bicycle commuting maps and promotions and other marketing strategies.
- **Investigate requiring employers to contribute up to 50 percent towards the cost of the program and/or a $10 to $20 co-payment per employee (after certain conditions are in place).** The criteria outlined by the report are: a determination that employers would not abandon the program in large numbers if they are required to pay, the existence of a comprehensive or more robust TDM program for employers through the ACCMA, and a stronger incentive for employers to provide commute alternative benefits for their employees.
- **Eliminate the minimum number of 75 employees per employer requirement.** Of the 11 GRH programs reviewed as part of the comprehensive program evaluation completed in 2009, the Alameda County GRH Program is the only program that has an employee per employer requirement. Based on other programs and the program's experience with the Emeryville TMA, the Berkeley Downtown Association, and reducing the employees per employer requirement from 100 to 75 employees in 2007, program staff does not believe that eliminating the employees per employer requirement would increase program costs.

A copy of the complete review and CMA Board recommendations is available on the CMA website at www.accma.ca.gov.

2009 Recommendations

Based on this evaluation report and the comprehensive program evaluation completed in February 2009, CMA staff recommends the following course of action for 2009:

New Recommendations for 2009

1. Continue operations and marketing, including maintaining website and conducting employee and employer surveys.

Operations of the GRH program should continue in 2009 including database maintenance, general marketing, and maintaining the website. Employee and employer surveys should be completed annually as part of the annual program evaluation report. The surveys for the 2009 evaluation should be scheduled for late January/early February 2010.

2. Continue to monitor and market the 50+ mile car rental requirement.

GRH staff should continue monitoring and marketing the requirement to take non-emergency rides greater than 50 miles with rental cars. Marketing should be focused on informing new employers and employees about the requirement. This effort should include continuing to telephone and e-mail participants who used the program for non-emergency rides and live over

50 miles from their workplace to remind the participant of the program requirement and attach reminders to all vouchers about the requirement.

3. Focus on registering businesses in South and Central Alameda County.

Although the program has been broadly marketed to all jurisdictions within Alameda County, staff should begin a targeted marketing effort to enroll businesses in South and Central Alameda County.

There are 188 businesses registered in the GRH Program. The North and East County cities such as Pleasanton, Oakland, Berkeley, and Emeryville represent over 80% of all registered GRH businesses. Newark and San Leandro only have two registered businesses while Berkeley and Oakland in North County have 35 and 38 registered businesses respectively.

In order to create more program equity across Alameda County and increase participation in South and Central Alameda County, the GRH Program should focus marketing efforts on employers in these areas in 2009. By working with Chambers of Commerce and business associations in South and Central County cities, the GRH Program should attempt to increase awareness and participation in these areas.

Recommendations Approved by the CMA Board in February 2009

In February 2009, the CMA Board approved the following recommendations identified in the independent comprehensive program evaluation.

4. Implement and Market the Zero Minimum Employee per Employer Requirement.

In February 2009, The CMA Board recommended eliminating the employer size requirement and opening the program to any employer in the county, regardless of size. The recommendation was based on the results of the comprehensive program evaluation which found that of 11 GRH programs nationwide, only the CMA program had a minimum number of employees per employer requirement. Based on our experience increased enrollment and zero ride use in 2008 with the addition of the Emeryville TMA and DBA, GRH staff does not anticipate the change having a large impact on program administration. Opening the program to all employers would create an equitable program on par with other Bay Area and nationwide GRH programs. Eliminating the minimum number of employees per employer requirement may not necessarily greatly expand the number of businesses and employees enrolled in the program or the number of rides taken since smaller businesses often are not able to dedicate staff to market and administer the GRH program internally.

GRH staff should work with Chambers of Commerce and create press releases to advertise the change in the program and continue to form partnerships with TMAs and business associations to more effectively market the program to all employers regardless of size.

5. Investigate implementing a regional GRH Program with MTC and all nine counties in the region.

The CMA Board recommended that the CMA work with MTC to investigate initiating a regionwide GRH program. This has the potential of reducing total indirect costs (such as administration, marketing and overhead) across the merged programs. Staff should contact the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Bay Area counties to discuss interest in assuming operations of the GRH Program.

Should a regionwide program be developed, the eligibility circumstances for rides and reimbursable expenses should be consistent with other programs in the Bay Area. Expanded valid circumstances for rides may include inclement weather for participants who walked or bicycled to work. Expanded reimbursable expenses consistent with the region may include, covering the cost of emergency rides taken on transit or provided by coworkers, taxicab gratuities, and fuel refills for car rentals.

6. Investigate requiring employers to contribute toward the cost of the GRH Program.

The GRH program has been funded by the Air District TFCA funds since 1998. To diversify program funding and address the CMA Board's concerns about having employers contribute towards the cost of their employees reducing congestion and air emissions, the CMA Board recommended investigating methods of introducing employer contributions into the program.

Because the program has been offered without a fee since inception[8], even a minimal charge to employers could lead to employer attrition in the program. As recommended by the CMA Board in February 2009, the 2008 employer survey asked whether employers would be willing to contribute financially to the program and how much. Survey results showed that employers would generally be unwilling to pay for the program with 83% of respondents stating that their employer would be "unlikely" or "very unlikely" to participate if an annual fee of $250-$1,000 was levied per employer and 64% responding that their employer would be "unlikely" or "very unlikely" to participate in the program if the program charged $10-$20 annually per registered employee or any amount.

In Boston and King County, Washington, programs are able to pass on the full costs of their GRH programs to their employers, however, this is likely explained by program-specific reasons that do not apply to the Alameda County program. The Boston program is operated as part of an employer-run transportation management association while the King County program is a result of a state law requiring employers to provide commute alternative programs. In addition, both programs provide participants with a full package of commute alternative services, not just a GRH program.

Because of the potential for employer contributions to reduce participation in the program—and given that the program already has a stable source of funds, in the form of the TFCA—the comprehensive program evaluation recommended that the CMA require employer contributions only if several conditions are in place. These conditions are:

[8] The GRH Program has been 100% funded by TFCA funding and offered fee-free to employer and employee participants since 1998.

- A determination, based on results of future employer representative surveys, that employers would not abandon the program in large numbers if they are required to pay for it[9];
- The existence of a comprehensive, or at least more robust, TDM program for Alameda County employers; and,
- A stronger incentive for employers to provide commute alternative benefits for their employees. This could be in the form of a requirement imposed by the state, possibly as a result of AB 32 or SB 375, two relatively new state laws related to reducing greenhouse gas emissions; or requirements imposed by municipalities, similar to San Francisco's ordinance requiring large and medium-size employers to offer commute benefits.

7. Expand the GRH Program in Alameda County into a comprehensive TDM Program (pending new funding).

The CMA GRH Program is the only reviewed program that does not include other transportation demand management (TDM) programs. Including the GRH program as part of a comprehensive TDM program would result in economies of scale for marketing and administration. A package of TDM options is being considered as part of the climate change efforts the CMA is pursuing to address greenhouse gas emissions requirements through AB 32 and SB 375. The GRH Program, whether in Alameda County or regionwide, should be considered part of these efforts.

[9] The employer survey completed in March 2009 showed that employers are generally unwilling to contribute to participate in the GRH Program. The high negative response rate may be partially due to the current state of the economy.