Performance Evaluation of the ACCMA Guaranteed Ride Home Program

Submitted to the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency

January 30, 2009

EISEN | LETUNIC
Transportation, Environmental and Urban Planning

Table of Contents

Executive Summary i
Introduction 1
Chapter 1: Comparison to Other Programs 3
Chapter 2: Survey Effectiveness 29
Chapter 3: Program Principles 39
Chapter 4: Alternative Funding Strategies 51
Chapter 5: Overall Program Recommendations 61
Appendix A: Employee Survey 67
Appendix B: Employer Representative Survey 71
Appendix C: Detailed Edits for Survey Questions 75

Executive Summary

Overview

The Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (CMA) has sponsored a "Guaranteed Ride Home" (GRH) program since April 1998. The program provides vouchers good for a free ride home in a taxi or rental car to any registered employee of a participating employer in cases of emergency or unscheduled overtime on days in which the employee has used an alternative mode of transportation to get to work. The objective of the GRH program is to encourage eligible employees to use commute alternatives—including transit, carpools, vanpools, bicycling and walking—instead of driving to work alone. The program is funded through grants from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's Transportation Fund for Clean Air.

Following a recommendation by the CMA Board, the CMA hired Eisen | Letunic, a Bay Area-based consulting firm, to carry out an independent performance review of the GRH program to ensure that it is being administered and operated as efficiently and effectively as possible and to explore alternative funding strategies. The review consists of four tasks:

❶ To compare the CMA's GRH program to similar programs in other counties on a number of key dimensions, including operating principles and characteristics, number of people served, program budget and fund sources, and supportive programs. This task is described in Chapter 1 of this report, beginning on page 3.

❷ To assess the historical performance of the GRH program against the program's original guiding principles, using performance measures developed based on the guiding principles. This task is described in Chapter 2, beginning on page 29.

❸ To evaluate the effectiveness of the surveys administered to participating program employers and employees and, if necessary, make recommendations to improve the surveys. This task is described in Chapter 3, beginning on page 39.

❹ To consider alternative funding strategies for the GRH program to ensure its financial sustainability and long-term viability. This task is described in Chapter 4, beginning on page 51.

The report concludes with overall recommendations for the program, based on the findings from our performance review, beginning on page 61.

Task Summaries

Below are summaries of the four review tasks outlined above:

❶ Comparison to Other Programs

We profiled eight GRH programs, in addition to the CMA's program. These included the four other county-level GRH programs in the Bay Area (Contra Costa County, City and County of San Francisco, San Mateo County and Solano/Napa counties); one other program in California (the program serving Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties); and three programs outside the state (King County, Washington; Boston; and Metropolitan Washington, DC). The programs are compared across a number of key dimensions, including eligibility criteria for employers and employees, valid circumstances for the use of rides, types of rides offered, limitations on use, number of participating employers and employees, number of rides taken annually, average cost of the rides, annual costs, funding sources and other TDM programs offered. The program profiles appear on pages 6-20.

Following the profiles are key findings from our research and "best practices" gleaned from the design and operation of the various GRH programs (pages 20-28). The best practices are presented for consideration by the CMA as potential ways to improve the effectiveness of its GRH program. Key findings and best practices include, among others:

- **Service area:** Of the nine programs, three serve employers in more than one county. Based partly on this finding, we recommend that the CMA explore merging the GRH program with one or more other programs in adjacent counties (see Chapter 5, recommendation #2).

- **Employer eligibility:** The CMA's program is the only one that requires employers to be of a certain minimum size in order to participate in the program; all other programs allow any

employer in their service area to participate, regardless of size. We suggest eliminating the employer size requirement and extending membership eligibility to other groups, such as transportation management associations, downtown associations and colleges and universities, provided that they are able to assume liability for their members' actions.

- **Annual cost:** Meaningful program comparisons across this area are very difficult for a number of reasons, including that the costs of other GRH programs are absorbed into the budgets of broader TDM programs. However, based on limited information, it appears that both the total cost and the marketing costs of the CMA program are in line with those of other programs. Of four other programs for which we have their total annual cost, the CMA program has a higher cost than two of the programs and a lower cost than the other two. Similarly, of programs for which we have marketing cost information, marketing costs are a larger percentage of total costs under some programs than under the CMA program, while they are a smaller percentage under other programs.

- **Average ride cost:** The CMA program reported the second highest average ride cost, at $86. This could be for several reasons: higher taxi surcharges in Oakland, higher cab fares and a generally higher cost of living in Alameda County compared to other parts of the Bay Area (and of the Bay Area compared to other parts of the country) and the high percentage of rides taken under the CMA program by taxi, which tend to be more expensive than rental car rides. To reduce the average ride cost, the CMA program has been promoting its policy that rental cars are required for rides of 50 miles or more (except in case of emergencies) and encouraged for rides between 20 and 50 miles. To the extent that reducing costs is a priority, controlling the cost of rides is less important than controlling other costs such as administration, marketing and overhead. The reason is that the cost of rides makes up only 8 percent of the total budget of the Alameda County program, whereas other costs constitute 92 percent.

- **Funding sources:** Most of the programs, and all the ones in the Bay Area, are funded entirely or primarily through public sources. All Bay Area GRH programs except one receive grants from the BAAQMD–TFCA and three receive funding from the local half-cent sales tax for transportation. Two programs are funded exclusively by employers (King County and Boston), while an additional two receive some employer contributions. Our main funding-related recommendation is that the CMA program continue to rely exclusively on TFCA grants (Chapter 5, recommendation #1). Alternatively, the CMA could consider requiring employers to contribute toward the cost of the GRH program once certain conditions are in place (Chapter 5, recommendation #4).

- **Supportive TDM programs:** With the notable exception of the CMA, all the sponsoring agencies of the GRH programs we researched offer additional TDM programs and services. These typically include financial incentives for using transit, vanpools and carpools; ridesharing and ride-

matching services; and promotions for walking and bicycling. Based partly on this finding, we recommend that the CMA consider offering, either alone or in partnership with other counties, additional commute alternative programs and services (Chapter 5, recommendation #3).

❷ Survey Effectiveness

The program distributes an annual survey to the representatives of employers who are registered in the GRH program and a separate annual survey to registered employees. We review the design and administration of the two surveys (rather than the survey results), evaluate their effectiveness and make recommendations for improvements. For each survey, we discuss how it can be revised to improve the collection of information needed to evaluate the success and performance of the GRH program against its guiding principles. In particular, we suggest ways in which the survey can attempt to gauge the value that employees and employers place on the program and also to prompt respondents to give more revealing and truthful responses, rather than what they think the survey administrator wants or expects to hear. This is followed by more narrow and specific recommendations related to individual questions and online survey screens, with the objective of improving the meaning, tone and order of questions and the organization and flow of the screens. Recommendations related to the employee survey are on pages 32-36, while recommendations on the employer representative survey are on pages 36-38. A set of appendices, beginning on page 67, contains the hard-copy version of the employee survey administered in 2008 (Appendix A; the online version was nearly identical), the hard-copy version of the employer representative survey (Appendix B) and our detailed edits suggested for various questions in both the employee and employer representative surveys (Appendix C).

❸ Program Principles

On January 29, 1998, shortly before the launch of the GRH program, the CMA Board adopted a set of three principles to guide the development and operation of the program. We assess the performance of the GRH program against these guiding principles, using performance measures that reflect the intentions behind the principles. Below is a summary of our evaluation of each guiding principle.

Principle 1: Maximize shift from driving alone to transit, carpooling, bicycling and walking

The performance measures we use to assess the performance of the GRH program against this guiding principle are: (i) effectiveness in changing commute behavior of program participants; and, (ii) reductions in emissions of air quality pollutants. For the first performance measure we use the results of the annual survey distributed among employees registered in the GRH program; we find that the survey results broadly suggest, using several criteria, that the GRH program encourages participating employees to shift from driving alone to using alternative modes of transportation for their commute. For the second performance measure, we use cost-effectiveness

calculations for air-emission reductions made by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) for projects applying for funding under its Transportation Fund for Clean Air (TFCA) program. The BAAQMD determined that the GRH program was more than twice as cost-effective as other projects under the ridesharing category that applied for TFCA funds. For ridesharing projects, the BAAQMD bases its estimates of emissions reduced on a project's potential to encourage a shift in commuting behavior away from single-occupancy vehicles; this means that, in comparison to other projects, the GRH program is considered significantly more effective at promoting a shift from driving alone to using commute alternatives.

Principle 2: Determine value of GRH to employers and employees

Unfortunately, the GRH program does not collect, and we do not have, quantitative or qualitative information on the value that employees or employers place on such aspects as time or monetary savings from participating in the GRH program. Instead, the performance measures we use to assess the performance of the GRH program against this guiding principle are the satisfaction of employees and employer representatives with the program, using satisfaction as a proxy for value. Using survey results, we find a generally high level of satisfaction with the GRH program among both employees and employer representatives, with the possible exception of employees' wait time for a ride. However, we also determine that, because satisfaction is not an adequate proxy for "valuation" of the program, we cannot make a conclusive determination about it. In conclusion, we recommend ways for the program to collect information through the annual surveys that could be used in the future to determine the value that employees and employers assign to the program (Chapter 2).

Principle 3: Develop a sustainable program (if possible)

The performance measures we use to assess the performance of the GRH program against this guiding principle are: (i) long-term continuous operation of the program, beyond the start-up phase; and, (ii) support from one or more secure and reliable funding sources. Concerning the first performance measure, we find the program to be successful, as it has operated continuously, with no interruptions, for ten and a half years; during that time, it has grown at a pace healthy enough to suggest continued interest on the part of employers and employees but not so fast as to overwhelm the program financially or administratively. Regarding the second measure, we find the performance of the GRH program to be mixed. The program has successfully managed to secure sufficient funding to operate for each of the past ten years. However, all program funding has come from a single source, meaning that the program has not yet developed additional sources of funding. Chapter 4 discusses alternative funding strategies for the GRH program while Chapter 5 includes funding-related recommendations.

❹ Alternative Funding Strategies

We explore alternative funding strategies for the GRH program—in particular, the use of employer contributions—with the objective of ensuring its financial sustainability and long-term viability. We examine the funding strategies used by 11 other programs—those profiled in Chapter 1 along with three additional ones: Santa Rosa, in Sonoma County; Sacramento; and Austin, TX—and we review a 2006 study by the Federal Transit Administration of 55 GRH programs around the country (pages 52-56). We find, among other things, that almost all programs are funded through public sources; five of six Bay Area programs are funded at least in part through TFCA grants; five programs receive funding from the local half-cent sales tax for transportation; and two programs are funded exclusively by employers (King County and Boston) while an additional two receive some employer contributions (San Francisco and San Mateo County).

We also explore in more depth the funding strategy employed by the CMA's program (pages 56-58). We find that the use of TFCA grants to fund the CMA program is appropriate on a number of counts. In particular, the program:

- fits the TFCA's purpose of decreasing motor vehicle emissions;
- is able to reduce air emissions in a highly cost-effective manner, falling well within the cost-effectiveness limits imposed by the BAAQMD;
- is more cost-effective than almost 90 percent of projects submitted from eight Bay Area counties and under nine project categories that were evaluated under the TFCA's County Program Manager Fund in 2007;
- is one of five GRH programs in the Bay Area (out of six total) that receive TFCA funding;
- does not also offer other TDM services, unlike all the programs we evaluated that receive employer contributions; and
- is not legislatively mandated, unlike some of the employer-funded programs we evaluated.

Our recommendations concerning program funding are presented in Chapter 5, "Overall Program Recommendations."

Overall Program Recommendations

Chapter 5 contains our overall recommendations for the program, based on the findings from our performance review. There are four tiered recommendations:

Recommendation ❶: Continue to rely exclusively on TFCA grants to fund the GRH program

As mentioned above, we find that the use of TFCA grants to fund the CMA's program is appropriate on a number of counts. For this reason, our main recommendation is that the CMA continue to rely exclusively on TFCA grants to fund its GRH program for now. While it would be ideal not to rely on a single source of funds, the TFCA is a highly secure and reliable source. TFCA grants have enabled the GRH program to operate without interruption for ten years and demonstrate continued support from the BAAQMD. The program ranks highly under the TFCA's scoring criteria and guidelines so it does not appear to be in danger of losing out to competing projects. It is unlikely that the BAAQMD will change TFCA funding criteria in a way that would make the GRH program ineligible for funding or less likely to be fully funded. It is even less likely that the TFCA will be terminated outright or that its funds will be sufficiently reduced to make even high-scoring projects eligible for funds.

Recommendation ❷: Merge the Alameda County GRH program with other GRH programs in the Bay Area

We recommend that the CMA merge the Alameda County GRH program with programs in adjacent counties, such as the Contra Costa County program, which is operated by 511 Contra Costa. Merging the program has the potential to reduce indirect costs for program administration, marketing and overhead across the merged programs by taking advantage of efficiencies of scale. The merger idea is supported by the fact that the Alameda County GRH program benefits some employees who work but do not live in the county while the converse is also true: GRH programs in other Bay Area counties benefit some employees who work in those counties but who live in Alameda County. An additional benefit of a merger is that most other Bay Area counties already provide additional commute alternative programs along with their GRH program. A merger would, therefore, allow the CMA to expand the range of commute alternative programs offered to residents of Alameda County (see recommendation #3).

Recommendation ❸: Expand the GRH program into a comprehensive TDM program

We recommend that the CMA expand the GRH program into a comprehensive TDM program. Of all the GRH programs we examined, the CMA program is the only one that is not operated as part of broader TDM or commute alternative efforts. Expanding the program would allow the CMA to broaden the range of commute alternative services it provides to residents of Alameda County while fulfilling the Travel-Demand Management Element of its 2007 Congestion Management Program. It would also work toward meeting the objectives of AB 32 and SB 375, state legislative mandates to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. Additional commute alternative services that the CMA could offer 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. To fund these

additional services, the CMA should investigate the county's sales tax for transportation, the TFCA and funding sources from other public agencies.

Recommendation ❹: Require employers to contribute toward the cost of the GRH program (recommended only if certain conditions are in place)

Even a minimal charge to employers could lead to employer attrition in the Alameda County program. The annual survey conducted in 2004 among employer representatives asked if the representative's company would continue to participate in the GRH program if it charged a "minimal annual fee for each employee." Just over half (51 percent) of respondents stated that their company would no longer participate in the program; only 19 percent answered that their company would continue with the program, with the remaining 30 percent saying that they did not know. While the Boston and King County programs are able to pass on the full costs of their GRH programs to employers, 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—we recommend that the CMA require employer contributions only if several conditions are in place. These conditions are:

- 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;
- The existence of a comprehensive, or at least more robust, TDM program for Alameda County employers (see recommendation #3); and,
- A stronger incentive for employers to provide commute alternative benefits for their employees. This could be in the form of a return to higher gas prices; requirements imposed by the state, possibly as a result of AB 32 or SB 375, two relatively new state laws related to climate change and smart growth; or requirements imposed by municipalities, similar to San Francisco's ordinance requiring large and medium-size employers to offer commute benefits (see discussion of San Francisco's GRH program in Chapter 1).

Introduction

The Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (CMA) has sponsored a "Guaranteed Ride Home" (GRH) program since April 1998. The program provides vouchers good for a free ride home in a taxi or rental car to any registered employee of a participating employer in cases of emergency or unscheduled overtime on days in which the employee has used an alternative mode of transportation to get to work. (To be able to participate, employers must have at least 75 employees at worksites located in Alameda County.) The objective of the GRH program is to encourage eligible employees to use commute alternatives—including transit, carpools, vanpools, bicycling and walking—instead of driving to work alone. At the end of 2007, the program had 155 participating employers and 4,437 registered employees. The program is funded through grants from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's Transportation Fund for Clean Air (BAAQMD–TFCA) program and is currently operated on behalf of the CMA by Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates. Additional background information about the GRH program is available on the program's website, at www.grh.accma.ca.gov.

As part of program operations, Nelson\Nygaard performs an annual evaluation of the program for approval by the CMA Board. The evaluation includes surveying employers and employees and making recommendations to improve the functioning of the program. One of the CMA Board's recommendations, following its acceptance and approval of the program evaluation for 2007, was that the CMA hire a third-party consultant to carry out an independent performance review of the GRH program to ensure that it is being administered and operated as efficiently and effectively as possible and to explore alternative funding strategies. In October 2008, the CMA hired Eisen|Letunic, a transportation and urban planning firm, to conduct this review.

The review consists of four tasks. These tasks, including findings and task-specific recommendations, are covered in the first four chapters of this report, as follows:

- **Chapter 1:** Compares the CMA's GRH program to similar programs in other counties on a number of key dimensions, including operating principles and characteristics, number of people served, program budget and fund sources, and supportive programs.
- **Chapter 2:** Assesses the historical performance of the GRH program against the program's original guiding principles, using performance measures developed based on the guiding principles.
- **Chapter 3:** Evaluates the effectiveness of the surveys administered to participating program employers and employees and, if necessary, make recommendations to improve the surveys.
- **Chapter 4:** Recommends alternative funding strategies for the GRH program to ensure its long-term viability.

The report concludes with overall recommendations for the program, followed by a set of appendices.

Chapter 1 | Comparison to Other Programs

Introduction

This chapter compares a number of key aspects and characteristics of the CMA's GRH program to those of other GRH-type programs (from here on referred to simply as "GRH programs") in the Bay Area, elsewhere in California and in the rest of the country. The findings from this task informed our findings and recommendations under the subsequent tasks: effectiveness of the annual employer and employee surveys, program assessment based on performance measures and alternative funding strategies.

This chapter contains detailed profiles of nine GRH programs. For our comparison we researched, in addition to the Alameda County program: the four other county-level GRH programs in the Bay Area; a four-county program in Southern California that is the largest GRH program in the state by number of employees covered; and three well-established programs outside the state, for which adequate information was relatively easy to obtain. The nine programs (listed by their service area) are:

Bay Area

❶ Alameda County
❷ Contra Costa County
❸ City and County of San Francisco
❹ San Mateo County
❺ Solano/Napa counties

Other California

❻ Los Angeles/Orange/Riverside/ San Bernardino counties

Other U.S.

❼ King County, WA (Seattle)
❽ Central Boston (MA)
❾ Washington, DC metro area

The methods we used to conduct our research included the following:

- Phone and e-mail exchanges with program managers or coordinators
- Annual reports and other documents provided by these contact people
- Additional material available on the programs' Web sites or Web pages
- *Guaranteed Ride Home Peer Review* report (2008), by Nelson\Nygaard, the firm that operates the Alameda County GRH program on behalf of the CMA
- A 2006 Federal Transit Administration report, *Guaranteed Ride Home Programs: A study of program characteristics, utilization, and cost* (William B. Menczer, May 19, 2006) also informed this report, though to a much lesser extent than the other sources

Lastly, our research focused on the following items of information:

Overview

- Agency or agencies that sponsor the program
- Program's geographic service area (defined as the area in which employers must be located to be eligible for the program, rather than where employees must live in order to be eligible)
- Year in which the program was started
- Program's Web site or Web page
- Name and contact information of primary contact person for the program

Program Design

- General eligibility criteria for employers and employees
- Valid circumstances for the use of rides under the program
- Types of rides offered by the program (for example, taxi and rental car)
- Details concerning registration for the program by employers or employees and process for obtaining a ride

- Key limitations on use of the program, particularly regarding the number of rides per employee and ride distance

Operational Statistics

- Number of registered, enrolled or otherwise participating employers
- Number of registered, enrolled or otherwise participating employees
- Number of annual rides taken by program participants
- Average cost of the rides
- Average distance of the rides

Funding

- Annual cost to operate the program, including both direct costs, such as ride fares, and indirect costs, such as administration and marketing
- Funding sources that support the program
- Details on fees or other financial contributions made by employers toward the cost of rides or for the overall program
- Information on any contributions by employees

Supportive TDM Programs

- Transportation demand management (TDM) programs, services and projects in effect in the service area of the GRH program that are aimed at promoting commute alternatives. While it is beyond the scope of our research to examine in detail additional TDM programs offered, it is important to note their existence because of the role they play in supporting and complementing GRH programs.

Not all the above information was available for every program, particularly operational statistics, annual program costs and specific funding sources. For one thing, most programs are run more informally than the Alameda County program and do not collect or compile as much information. For another, all surveyed GRH programs—Alameda County's being the notable exception—are operated as part of broader TDM efforts (this is an important finding and is the subject of one of our overall recommendations for the program, discussed in Chapter 5). This means that their costs and funding are typically folded into the finances of the parent TDM program, making it impossible in many cases to identify the GRH program-specific expenses.

Below are the nine program profiles. Following the profiles are key findings from our research, along with "best practices" gleaned from the design and operation of the various GRH programs.

❶ Alameda County Guaranteed Ride Home

Overview

- **Sponsor:** Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (Oakland)
- **Service area:** Alameda County
- **Year started:** 1998
- **Online information:** www.grh.accma.ca.gov
- **Contact:** Jeff Flynn (Nelson\Nygaard); jflynn@nelsonnygaard.com

Program Design

- **Eligibility:** Employers located in Alameda County with 75 or more employees or that are part of a registered business park; and their permanent employees (full- or part-time) in Alameda County who live within 100 miles of work and who used a commute alternative on the day the ride is needed. Both employers and employees must register for the program.
- **Ride types:** Taxi and rental car. Rental cars are strongly encouraged for trips longer than 20 miles and are required for trips longer than 50 miles, provided that the employee is not ill, is comfortable driving and meets certain other criteria.
- **Valid circumstances for rides:** Illness or severe crisis of an employee or immediate family member; unscheduled overtime work requested by supervisor; ridesharing vehicle breaks down or driver unexpectedly has to stay late or leave early.
- **Usage details:** Upon registration, the employee receives a voucher for a taxi ride or for a car rental (good until 9:30 am the day after the ride). In case of an emergency or unscheduled overtime, the employee calls the taxi or rental car company to arrange for a ride. The employee automatically receives a new ride voucher in the mail after he or she returns a completed ride evaluation questionnaire to the worksite program representative. The program offers "instant enrollment," which allows employees to register on the same day a ride is needed. The voucher does not cover a gratuity for the taxi driver or gas for the rental car.
- **Limitations:** Two rides per employee per month and six per year. Ride distance limit of 100 miles.

Operational Statistics

- **Number of participating employers:** 155
- **Number of participating employees:** 4,437
- **Number of rides taken in latest year:** 98 (80 taxi and 18 rental car)

- **Average ride cost:** $86.13

Funding

- **Annual cost:** $135,000; includes approximately $8,500 for rides, $58,000 for administration, $20,000 for marketing and $15,500 for other expenses such as the annual surveys and program report.
- **Funding source:** BAAQMD–TFCA
- **Employer contributions:** None
- **Employee contributions:** Fuel refill for the rental car; taxi gratuity.

Supportive TDM Programs

- The GRH program is the only commute-alternative program currently offered by the CMA. However, Alameda County residents are able to take advantage of services offered by 511 Bay Area, a commute alternative clearinghouse for the nine Bay Area counties. These include some financial incentives for using transit, vanpools and carpools, and a ride-matching service. Detailed information on the commute alternative programs offered by 511 Bay Area is available at rideshare.511.org.

❷ 511 Contra Costa Countywide Guaranteed Ride Home

Overview

- **Sponsors:** 511 Contra Costa and West Contra Costa Transportation Advisory Committee
- **Service area:** Contra Costa County
- **Year started:** 1997
- **Online information:** www.511contracosta.org/commuter-incentives/guaranteed-ride-home
- **Contact:** Linda Young; linday@511contracosta.org

Program Design

- **Eligibility:** Any employer in Contra Costa County, regardless of size; and any of its employees in the county who used a commute alternative on the day the ride is needed. Both employers and employees must register for the program.

- **Ride types:** Taxi and rental car
- **Valid circumstances for rides:** Illness, injury or severe crisis of an employee or immediate family member; unscheduled overtime work requested by supervisor; ridesharing vehicle breaks down or driver has to leave early; break-in, flood or fire at the employee's home.
- **Usage details:** Upon registration, the employee selects either a voucher for a taxi ride or a voucher for a car rental. In case of an emergency, the employee calls the taxi or rental car company to arrange for a ride. The taxi voucher covers the fare, a 10 percent gratuity and any bridge tolls; the rental car voucher only covers the reservation until 9:30 am the day after the ride. The employee automatically receives a new ride voucher in the mail if he or she returns a completed ride evaluation questionnaire to the worksite program representative within seven days of the ride.
- **Limitations:** Two rides per employee per month and six per year. No limit on ride distance.

Operational Statistics

- **Number of participating employers:** 586
- **Number of participating employees:** 3,800
- **Number of rides taken in latest year:** 600
- **Average ride cost:** $67

Funding

- **Annual cost:** $127,000, including $40,000 for rides and $65,000 for administration; marketing costs are largely absorbed into the budget of the overall 511 Contra Costa program.
- **Funding sources:** BAAQMD–TFCA (for approximately 75 percent of costs) and local half-cent sales tax for transportation (administered by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority; approximately 25 percent).
- **Employer contributions:** None
- **Employee contributions:** Fuel refill for the rental car

Supportive TDM Programs

- 511 Contra Costa was created as a collection of four sub-county TDM programs; as such, it exists expressly to promote commute alternatives. It offers a number of commute alternatives programs and services including financial incentives for using transit, carpools and vanpools; bicycling promotion; installation of bike racks and lockers; and ride-matching. Detailed information on the commute alternative services offered by 511 Contra Costa is available at www.511contracosta.org.

❸ San Francisco Emergency Ride Home

Overview

- **Sponsor:** Department of the Environment of the City and County of San Francisco
- **Service area:** San Francisco City and County
- **Year started:** 2004
- **Online information:** www2.sfenvironment.org/aboutus/air/erh
- **Contact:** Faiz Khan; faiz.khan@sfgov.org

Program Design

- **Eligibility:** Any employer in San Francisco, regardless of size; and any of its permanent employees (full- or part-time) in the city who used a commute alternative on the day the ride is needed. Only employers must register for the program.
- **Ride types:** Taxi, rental car, car share (only for employees who are members of City CarShare) and transit.
- **Valid circumstances for rides:** Illness or crisis of an employee or immediate family member; unscheduled overtime work requested by supervisor; carpool or vanpool ride is unavailable due to unexpected changes in driver's schedule or due to vehicle breakdown or mishap; bicycle-related problem, including flat tire, mechanical failure, vandalism, theft or unsafe bicycling conditions due to inclement weather.
- **Usage details:** In case of an emergency, the employee obtains permission for a ride from the worksite program representative. Either the employee or the worksite representative arranges for the ride. Due to San Francisco's "Transit First" policy, employees are expected to use transit for part or all of the trip when transit service is practical and available; otherwise the choice of ride is at the employee's discretion. The employer pays for the ride and submits to the program a ride claim form and valid receipt to obtain reimbursement; alternatively, the employee pays for the ride and is reimbursed by the employer, who is then reimbursed by the program. The program will reimburse for one-way taxi fare; a 24-hour car rental; up to 24 hours and 200 miles of City CarShare usage; or public transit fare.
- **Limitations:** Four rides per employee per year. No limit on ride distance.

Operational Statistics

- **Number of participating employers:** 150

- **Number of participating employees:** N/A
- **Number of rides taken in latest year:** 500
- **Average ride cost:** N/A

Funding

- **Annual cost:** Total program cost is not available, but includes approximately $15,000 for administration and $10,000 for marketing.
- **Funding sources:** BAAQMD–TFCA, local half-cent sales tax for transportation, other City and County funds and employer contributions.
- **Employer contributions:** Fifty percent of ride costs after $700 in annual ride expenses per employer and 100 percent after $2,000. Also, costs in excess of $200 per ride.
- **Employee contributions:** Fuel refill for the rental car; taxi gratuity.

Supportive TDM Programs

- The City and County of San Francisco provides several signed pick-up locations for "casual carpools," offers reduced parking rates for carpools at city-owned garages and issues parking permits with special privileges for vanpool vehicles. Also, beginning January 19, 2009, all employers in San Francisco with 20 or more employees are required to offer one or more of the following commute benefits: pre-tax deductions for transit expenses; paid transit fares or vanpool expenses; and free shuttle service.

❹ San Mateo County Guaranteed Ride Home

Overview

- **Sponsors:** Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance
- **Service area:** San Mateo County
- **Year started:** 2000
- **Online information:** www.commute.org/programs.htm#guaranteed or www.smccap.org/grh.jsp
- **Contact:** Karen Sumner; karen@commute.org

Program Design

- **Eligibility:** Any employer in San Mateo County, regardless of size; and any of its permanent employees in the county who used a commute alternative on the day the ride is needed. Both employers and employees must register for the program.
- **Ride types:** Taxi (for rides of 25 miles or less), rental car (for rides over 25 miles, unless the employee is unable to drive), county car, transit or ride from co-worker (program pays co-worker $20)
- **Valid circumstances for rides:** Illnesses of an employee, immediate family member or carpool driver; personal or family emergency; eldercare or daycare emergency; transit vehicle breakdown or no-show; theft of bicycle; bad weather (for employees who walk or bicycle to work); unscheduled overtime work requested by supervisor; unexpected early departure of rideshare partner.
- **Usage details:** The employee obtains a voucher from the worksite representatives, good for one taxi ride (plus gratuity and any bridge tolls) or 24-hour car rental. In case of an emergency, the employee calls the taxi, rental car company or county car pool or co-worker to arrange for a ride. The Alliance pays 75 percent of trip costs and the employer pays the remaining 25 percent. The Alliance is billed by the taxi or rental car company and, in turn, bills the employer for its share of trip costs incurred by its employee.
- **Limitations:** No program-imposed limit on the number of rides per employee or employer; however, employers may impose a limit, provided it is not fewer than four vouchers per employee per year. No limit on ride distance.

Operational Statistics

- **Number of participating employers:** 55
- **Number of participating employees:** 41,000 (the program counts as participants all employees of its participating employers).
- **Number of rides taken in latest year:** 200
- **Average ride cost:** $60

Funding

- **Annual cost:** Total program cost is not available, as it is absorbed into the overall budget of the Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance, but includes approximately $12,000 for rides. The annual budget of the Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance is $2,800,000, including $186,000 (7 percent) for advertising, promotions, marketing and related expenses.
- **Funding sources:** Local half-cent sales tax for transportation and employer contributions.

- **Employer contributions:** Employers are responsible for 25 percent of trip costs and for 100 percent of the cost beyond the first 25 miles of a taxi ride.
- **Employee contributions:** Fuel refill for the rental car.

Supportive TDM Programs

- The mission of the Peninsula Traffic Congestion Relief Alliance is to reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicles in San Mateo County. As such, it operates a number of TDM programs, including financial incentives for using transit, carpools and vanpools; subsidies for bicycle racks and lockers; and free bus shuttles between BART and Caltrain stations and employment centers in the county. Detailed information on the commute alternative programs offered by the Alliance is available at www.commute.org.

❺ Solano/Napa Emergency Ride Home

Overview

- **Sponsor:** Solano Transportation Authority
- **Service area:** Napa and Solano counties
- **Year started:** Solano: 2006; Napa: 2007
- **Online information:** www.sta.dst.ca.us/snci-erh.htm
- **Contact:** Judy Leaks (STA); jleaks@sta-snci.com

Program Design

- **Eligibility:** Any employer in Solano or Napa County, regardless of size; and any of its employees who live within 100 miles of work and who used a commute alternative on the day the ride is needed. Both employers and employees must register for the program (employers must register first).
- **Ride types:** Taxi and rental car; rental cars are required for trips over 20 miles unless the employee is unable to drive.
- **Valid circumstances for rides:** Illness or severe crisis of an employee or immediate family member; unscheduled overtime work requested by supervisor; ridesharing vehicle breaks down or driver has to unexpectedly stay late or leave early.
- **Usage details:** Upon registration, the employee receives a voucher good for a taxi ride, including gratuity, or 24-hour rental car, including one tank of gasoline. In case of an

emergency, the employee calls the taxi or rental car company to arrange for a ride. The employee automatically receives a new ride voucher in the mail if he or she returns a copy of the used voucher and a completed ride evaluation questionnaire to the program.

- **Limitations:** Three rides per employee per month and six per year. Ride distance limit of 100 miles.

Operational Statistics

- **Number of participating employers:** 43 in Solano and 9 in Napa
- **Number of participating employees:** 77 in Solano and 1 in Napa
- **Number of rides taken in latest year:** 6 in Solano and 1 in Napa
- **Average ride cost:** $103

Funding

- **Annual cost:** Total program cost is not available, as it is absorbed into the overall cost of the Solano | Napa Commuter Info program; however, it includes approximately $300 for ride costs in fiscal year 2006/07 and $700 in 2007/08 and $11,400 for marketing in 2006/07.
- **Funding sources:** BAAQMD–TFCA; Sacramento Area Council of Government's Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement funds (for rides originating in eastern Solano County).
- **Employer contributions:** None
- **Employee contributions:** None

Supportive TDM Programs

- Through the Solano | Napa Commute Info (SNCI) program, the Solano Transportation Authority conducts a number of TDM efforts in addition to its Emergency Ride Home program. These include financial incentives for using transit, carpools, vanpools and bicycles; ride-matching and commute "challenges;" and other promotions. Detailed information on the commute alternative programs offered by SNCI is available at www.solanolinks.com/commuterinfo.

⑥ CommuteSmart Guaranteed Ride Home (four Southern California counties)

Overview

- **Sponsors:** Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro), Orange County Transportation Authority, Riverside County Transportation Commission and San Bernardino Associated Governments, collaborating as the CommuteSmart partnership. The Ventura County Transportation Commission, also a CommuteSmart partner, operates its own program.
- **Service area:** Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties
- **Online information:** commutesmart.info/mycommute/guaranteedridehome_other.asp
- **Contact:** Donna Blanchard (LA Metro); blanchardd@metro.net

Program Design

- **Eligibility:** Any employer in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside or San Bernardino County, regardless of size; and any of its employees who rideshare on the day the ride is needed. Employers only must register for the program and they must agree to offer additional TDM services and programs in order to participate.
- **Ride types:** Taxi (generally required for rides of 30 miles or less) and rental car (generally required for rides over 30 miles)
- **Valid circumstances for rides:** Illness of an employee or immediate family member; unscheduled overtime work requested by supervisor; missed connections with a planned ride home due to an unanticipated change in schedule; other emergency situations "as appropriate and at the discretion of sponsoring agencies."
- **Usage details:** In case of an emergency, the employee first requests a program authorization form from the worksite program representative. The employee then calls the program's 24-hour call center to request a ride and obtain an approval number. The call center operator determines the type of ride to be provided, based on the employee's circumstances, and refers the employee to a taxi or rental car company. The authorization form, with the approval number written on it, serves as payment for the ride. The program pays for the full cost of taxi rides, including gratuity, and of car rentals until 9:30 am the following morning, including fuel

refill. The employee must return a customer satisfaction survey to the program within two days of the ride or risk future ineligibility.

- **Limitations:** Four rides per employee per year. No limit on ride distance.

Operational Statistics (Los Angeles County only)

- **Number of participating employers:** 642
- **Number of participating employees:** 358,592 (the program counts as participants all employees of its participating employers).
- **Number of rides taken in latest year:** 224 (190 taxi and 34 rental car).
- **Average ride cost:** $70.42 (weighted average based on reported figures of $73 for taxi rides and $56 for rental car rides).

Funding

- **Annual cost:** Not available, as it is absorbed into the overall cost of the CommuteSmart program, but includes approximately $15,800 for rides (Los Angeles County only).
- **Funding sources:** Counties' sales tax for transportation
- **Employer contributions:** None
- **Employee contributions:** None

Supportive TDM Programs

- In addition to the GRH program, CommuteSmart offers numerous financial incentives for using transit, vanpools and carpools; bicycling and walking promotions; and ride-matching and other ridesharing services. Detailed information on the commute alternative services offered by the CommuteSmart program is available at commutesmart.info.

❼ King County Home Free Guarantee (Seattle)

Overview

- **Sponsor:** King County Metro Transit
- **Service area:** King County, WA
- **Year started:** 1987 (first GRH program in the country)
- **Online information:** kingcounty.gov/transportation/CommuteSolutions/products/HFG

- **Contact:** Michelle Fujiwara; michelle.fujiwara@kingcounty.gov

Program Design

- **Eligibility:** Any employer in King County, WA or other group, such as a college, that is able to assume liability; and any of its employees or members who used a commute alternative on the day the ride is needed. Only employers/groups must register for the program.
- **Ride types:** Taxi only
- **Valid circumstances for rides:** Illness or injury of an employee or immediate family member; daycare emergency; unscheduled overtime work requested by supervisor; driver of carpool or vanpool unexpectedly has to stay late or leave early.
- **Usage details:** In case of an emergency, the employee (or other program member) contacts the worksite program representative to request a ride and the representative calls the program's answering service. The answering service takes the employee's information, provides an authorization number for the employee and calls one of several contracting taxi companies to dispatch a taxi. The taxi company bills the ride to the program. The program covers the full cost of taxi rides, including gratuity.
- **Limitations:** Eight rides per employee per year. Limit on ride distance of 60 miles.

Operational Statistics

- **Number of participating employers:** 483
- **Number of participating employees:** 150,000 (the program counts as participants all employees of its participating employers, including some very large ones such as Boeing).
- **Number of rides taken in latest year:** 7,328
- **Average ride cost:** $44

Funding

- **Annual cost:** $412,000, including $322,000 in rides and $30,000 (7 percent) in marketing.
- **Funding source:** Employer contributions
- **Employer contributions:** Large employers are assessed a flat rate of $2.60 for each of its employees for the first six months of the annual contract. The assessment may be increased to $3 or $3.50 for the second six-month period based on employer usage of the program. Smaller firms are charged a uniform fee, regardless of the number of employees. More commonly, employers pay for the program indirectly, by enrolling in Metro's broader "FlexPass" program, which offers a number of commute alternative services in addition to the GRH program. These

include unlimited bus, commuter rail and streetcar service; vanpool and carpool subsidies; and even special discount offers from participating merchants. The annual price of a FlexPass varies by municipality within King County and by the package of commute benefits chosen but generally ranges from $50 to $500 per employee.

- **Employee contributions:** None

Supportive TDM Programs

- As a result of Washington state's Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) law, large employers must implement employee commute programs and cities and counties in the state must provide training and technical assistance to employers on commute programs. To help employers and municipalities implement these requirements, King County Metro Transit offers an extensive range of TDM services and programs, often contracted to employers, which include discounted transit fares, vanpool service, financial incentives for using vanpools and carpools and ride-matching. Detailed information on these programs is available at kingcounty.gov/transportation/CommuteSolutions.

8 ABC TMA Guaranteed Ride Home (Boston)

Overview

- **Sponsor:** A Better City Transportation Management Association (ABC TMA)
- **Service area:** Downtown Boston and an adjacent business district
- **Online information:** www.abctma.com/programs/guaranteed.htm
- **Contact:** David Straus; dstraus@abctma.org

Program Design

- **Eligibility:** Any employee of an ABC TMA employer member who uses a commute alternative more than one day per week, on average, and also used one on the day the ride is needed.
- **Ride types:** For-hire car service only
- **Valid circumstances for rides:** Illness, injury or personal crisis of an employee or family member; daycare emergency; residential emergency such as flooding or fire; unscheduled overtime work requested by supervisor; bicycle damage; driver of carpool or vanpool unexpectedly has to stay late or leave early.

- **Usage details:** The program contracts with a for-hire car service (which operates hybrid vehicles only). Employees obtain electronic ride vouchers via e-mail, which cover the full ride cost. In case of an emergency, the employee calls the car service to request a ride and provides the voucher number. The employee is required to submit a completed confirmation report to the program within one week of the ride in order to receive a new electronic voucher. Failure to submit the confirmation report could result in the employee's removal from the program.
- **Limitations:** Six times per employee per six-month period. No limit on ride distance.

Operational Statistics

- **Number of participating employers:** 31 "employer members," some of which are large office and retail centers with over a hundred individual employers.
- **Number of participating employees:** 75,000 (the ABC TMA counts as participants all employees of its employer members).
- **Number of rides taken in latest year:** 83
- **Average ride cost:** $46.90

Funding

- **Annual cost:** Approximately $125,000, including $4,000 for rides and $20,000 for marketing.
- **Funding source:** Employers' membership dues to ABC TMA.
- **Employer contributions:** None
- **Employee contributions:** None

Supportive TDM Programs

- As a transportation management association, ABC TMA offers several TDM services and programs in addition to the GRH program. These include financial incentives for using transit, vanpools and carpools; bicycling and walking promotions; and ride-matching. Detailed information on the commute alternative programs offered by ABC TMA is available at www.abctma.com/programs.

⑨ Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home (Washington, DC Metropolitan Area)

Overview

- **Sponsor:** Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
- **Service area:** Washington, DC metropolitan area
- **Year started:** 1997
- **Online information:** www.mwcog.org/commuter2/commuter/grh
- **Contact:** Nicholas W. Ramfos; nramfos@mwcog.org

Program Design

- **Eligibility:** Any employer in the Washington metropolitan area, regardless of size; and any of its employees who lives in the metropolitan area or a surrounding city or county, who uses a commute alternative at least twice a week, on average, and who also used one on the day the ride is needed. Registration is valid for one year and both employers and employees must register for the program. Employees may use the program one time before registering.
- **Ride types:** Taxi, rental car, transit and paratransit
- **Valid circumstances for rides:** Unexpected personal or family emergency; unexpected illness; unscheduled overtime work requested by supervisor.
- **Usage details:** In case of an emergency, the employee calls the Commuter Connections dispatcher to receive authorization. The dispatcher determines the type of ride to be provided, based on the employee's circumstances; issues an authorization number; and arranges the ride. The program pays for a taxi fare or 24-hour car rental. If transit is used for at least part of the ride, the program will mail the employee a transit reimbursement voucher.
- **Limitations:** Four times per employee per year. No limit on ride distance.

Operational Statistics

- **Number of participating employers:** N/A
- **Number of participating employees:** 140,487 (the program counts as participants all employees in the metropolitan Washington, DC area who use a commute alternative at least twice a week).
- **Number of rides taken in latest year:** 3,006

- **Average ride cost:** $67

Funding

- **Annual cost:** $545,000, including $200,000 for rides; marketing costs are not available for the program as they are absorbed into the cost of the overall Commuter Connections program. However, the annual budget for the Commuter Connections program is $5,000,000; of this, $2,175,000, or 44 percent, is for marketing, including $915,000 for "media buy."
- **Funding source:** General funds of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and other Commuter Connections member jurisdictions.
- **Employer contributions:** None
- **Employee contributions:** Taxi gratuity and fuel refill, taxes and insurance for rental car.

Supportive TDM Programs

- As a regional network of transportation organizations, Commuter Connections offers numerous TDM services and programs in addition to the GRH program. These include financial incentives for using transit, vanpools and carpools; bicycling and walking promotions; and ride-matching and other ride-sharing services. Detailed information on the commute alternative programs offered by Commuter Connections is available at www.mwcog.org/commuter2/commuter.

Key Findings and Suggested Best Practices

Making meaningful comparisons across GRH programs is exceedingly difficult for a number of methodological reasons, as explained below, and because the programs differ in important respects. Nevertheless, the information we gathered allows us to place the CMA program in a broader context of GRH programs elsewhere in the Bay Area and beyond in a number of critical program dimensions. Below are key findings from our research into various GRH programs around the Bay Area, elsewhere in California and in the rest of the country. Where appropriate, the key findings are accompanied by suggested "best practices" gleaned from the design and operation of the programs (best practices suggestions are indicated by the ▶ symbol). We present these best practices for consideration by the CMA as potential ways to improve the effectiveness of the Alameda County program.

Overview

1. **Sponsor:** Almost all the programs we looked at, including Alameda County's, are administratively sponsored by public agencies. The only exception is the Boston program, which is administered by an employer-supported transportation management association.

2. **Service area:** Of the nine programs, five—again including Alameda County's—serve only employers in one county. However, three programs serve employers in more than one county: the program for Solano/Napa (two counties), the CommuteSmart program (four counties in Southern California) and the Commuter Connections program (more than a dozen cities and counties in the Washington DC metropolitan area). At the other end of the spectrum, the Boston program serves only employers in downtown Boston and an adjacent business district.

   ▶ Consider merging the Alameda County program with one or more other programs in the Bay Area, in order to serve a multi-county area. This has the potential of reducing total indirect costs (such as administration, marketing and overhead) across the merged programs. One merger candidate is the Contra Costa County program, because 20 percent of employees enrolled in the Alameda County program live in Contra Costa.[1] The CMA also could invite the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, which is the congestion management agency for Santa Clara County, to co-sponsor a program for the two counties. While the Altamont Commuter Express operates a GRH program for its passengers, including in Santa Clara County, there is currently no countywide program in Santa Clara.

Program Design

3. **Employer eligibility:** The Alameda County program is the only one that requires employers to be of a certain minimum size in order to participate in the program. All other programs allow any employer in their service area to participate, regardless of size. The King County and Boston programs are the only ones that allow groups other than employers to participate, provided that they are able to assume liability for their members' actions with relation to the GRH program. However, the CMA's program is in the process of implementing two pilot projects extending participation to the Emeryville Transportation Management Association (TMA) and the Berkeley Downtown Association.[2]

---

[1] *Alameda County Congestion Management Agency Guaranteed Ride Home Program Evaluation—2007 Final* (Nelson\Nygaard, May 2008), fig. 3-15, p. 3-16.

[2] Ibid, p. 6-5.

- To increase the number of participating employers, eliminate the employer size requirement, opening the program to any employer in the county, regardless of size. However, this will not necessarily expand the number of people served or of rides taken since smaller businesses often are not able to dedicate staff to market and administer the GRH program internally.[3] Also, extend membership eligibility to other groups, such as colleges and universities, that are able to assume liability for their members' actions, and expand the pilot program to include other TMAs and downtown associations in Alameda County.

4. **Employee eligibility:** Five programs, including four in the Bay Area, require both employers and employees to register for their respective GRH program. Four programs require only employers to register. Programs that require employee registration employ methods to make employee participation more convenient: the Alameda County program, for example, offers "instant" (that is, same-day) enrollment, while the Washington DC program allows employees to use the program once before having to register. Programs that do not require employee registration generally require a third party such as the worksite representative to authorize and arrange for the guaranteed rides home.

   - Continue to require both employers and employees to register for the GRH program. Eliminating the requirement for employee registration would make it more convenient for employees to participate initially; however, it would also require greater oversight of the authorization of rides, which would add to employers' administrative burden for the program and ultimately make it less convenient for both employers and employees. Continue also to offer instant enrollment.

5. **Ride types:** Most programs, including Alameda County's, limit the choice of rides to taxis, for-hire cars and rental cars. However, several programs cover the cost of rides provided through other means, including transit, paratransit, co-workers and car-sharing. The San Mateo County program pays $20 to co-workers who provide an emergency ride home for their colleagues. The CMA's program has attempted to implement a pilot carshare project in Oakland and Emeryville.[4]

   - Cover the cost of emergency rides provided on transit and by co-workers. Transit rides might be especially helpful to employees who walked or bicycled to work. Continue to

[3] Ibid, p. 6-3.

[4] Ibid, p. 6-4.

explore covering rides provided through car-sharing to members of a car-sharing organization, as the San Francisco program does.

6. **Valid circumstances for rides:** Programs generally permit the use of guaranteed rides home in cases of illness, injury or crisis of an employee or immediate family member; unscheduled overtime work requested by supervisor; and unavailability of ridesharing vehicle or driver. Several programs define personal crisis broadly to include a variety of personal and home emergencies such as child or elder care and fire or flooding at home. Also, several programs include as additional valid circumstances inclement weather (San Francisco and San Mateo County) and bicycle-related problems such as a stolen bicycle, flat tire or broken chain (San Francisco, San Mateo County and Boston).

   ▶ Expand the list of valid circumstances for obtaining a ride to include inclement weather (for employees who walked or bicycled to work), bicycle-related problems (for bicycle commuters) and additional personal and home emergencies, such as child or elder care and fire or flooding at home.

7. **Usage details:** Details concerning the process through which employees obtain guaranteed rides home vary widely among programs. Some programs, including Alameda County's, allow employees to arrange for their ride themselves; other programs require that rides be authorized and arranged for by a third party such as the worksite representative or a program dispatcher or answering service. Most programs use vouchers or authorization numbers given to employees as payment for the rides; the San Francisco program reimburses employers for payment. Programs typically require that employees return a completed post-ride evaluation, survey or questionnaire.

   ▶ Following the example of the Boston program, issue vouchers to employees electronically, either online or via e-mail, and allow employees to complete and submit the ride evaluation questionnaire online or via e-mail as well.

8. **Limit on the number of rides:** All programs, with the exception of San Mateo County's, impose a limit on the number of rides that employees can take within a month, a year or, in the case of one program, a six-month period. (The San Mateo County program does not impose a limit; however, it allows individual employers to impose a limit, provided it is not fewer than four rides per employee per year.) The limit is typically four or six rides per year. The six-ride limit under the Alameda County program falls within this range. (No employee reached the limit in 2007 and only two employees have reached it since the program's inception, ten years ago; in

2007, the highest number of trips taken by any one person was three, taken by four employees.[5])

9. **Limit on ride distance:** Four programs impose a limit on ride distance: the programs for Alameda County (100 miles), San Francisco (200 miles, but only for car-share rides), Sonoma/Napa counties (100 miles) and King County (60 miles).

   ▶ Maintain the ride distance limit at 100 miles.

Operational Statistics

10. **Number of participating employers:** Among the programs for which we have such information, the number of participating employers ranged from 52 to 642. Three of the programs reported a higher number than the Alameda County program, while three reported a lower number (the Washington DC program did not report the number of participating employers, only of employees, while the Boston program reported "employer members," which include office and retail centers). By way of comparison, the number of employers participating in the Alameda County program was slightly higher than in the San Francisco program but significantly lower than in the Contra Costa County program—less than a third as many. This could be because the Alameda County program limits participation to employers with at least 75 employees whereas the Contra Costa County program is open to any employer, regardless of size.

    ▶ As recommended earlier, eliminate the employer size requirement and extend membership eligibility to non-employer groups to increase the number of participating employers.

11. **Number of participating employees:** This number varied widely, from under 100 (for the Solano/Napa program) to more than 100,000 (for the Southern California, King County and Washington, DC programs). Such a large disparity arises because of the way that programs define participants. Programs that require employees to register include only actively enrolled employees in their count, whereas other programs include all the employees who work for registered employers, regardless of whether they would ever be expected to use the program.

    ▶ Continue to require employees to register for the program. Eliminating the requirement for employee registration would greatly expand the number of employees covered by the

[5] Ibid, p. 2-2.

Alameda County program; however, it would not necessarily result in more people served. Also, as mentioned earlier, it would also require greater oversight of the authorization of rides, which would add to employers' administrative burden for the program and ultimately make it less convenient for employees.

12. **Number of rides taken in latest year:** This number varied from just 7 (for the Solano/Napa program) to 7,328 (for the King County program). The Alameda County program had the third lowest number of rides taken, 98. That figure is also the third lowest for the program since its inception, despite the fact that the number of participating employers has more than doubled and the number of participating employees is more than five times higher than during the program's first year of operation.[6] It is possible that the low number of rides taken is a sign of success, demonstrating that the program is serving its intended purpose as an "insurance policy," to be used only in case of emergency.

    - To expand the number of people served and the use of alternative commute modes, expand the list of valid circumstances for obtaining a ride to include inclement weather (for employees who walked or bicycled to work), bicycle-related problems (for bicycle commuters) and additional personal and home emergencies, such as child or elder care and fire or flooding at home; also, cover the cost of emergency rides provided on transit, by co-workers and through car-sharing.

13. **Average ride cost:** This figure ranged from $44 (King County program) to $103 (Solano/Napa program). The Alameda County program reported the second highest average ride cost, at $86. This could be partly a reflection of the generally higher cost of living in the Bay Area and also of the high percentage of rides taken by taxi, which tend to be more expensive than rental car rides. The Alameda County program is reducing the average ride cost by promoting the policy that rental cars are required for rides of 50 miles or more (except in case of emergencies) and encouraged for rides between 20 and 50 miles.[7] It should be noted that controlling the cost of rides is less important than controlling other costs such as administration, marketing and overhead: the cost of rides makes up only 8 percent of total costs for the Alameda County program whereas other costs constitute 92 percent.[8]

---

[6] Ibid, p. ES-3.

[7] Ibid, pp. 6-3 to 6-4.

[8] *Guaranteed Ride Home Peer Review* (Nelson\Nygaard, undated), fig. 2.

Funding

14. **Annual cost:** This is perhaps the hardest area across which to compare programs. In many cases, the costs of the other GRH programs are absorbed into the budget of the "umbrella" commute alternative program. Also, the cost is largely a function of the size of the program, which as explained earlier, varies widely. We were able to obtain the annual cost for five GRH programs. Three programs were grouped at one end of the range: Boston, $125,000; Contra Costa County, $127,000; and Alameda County, $135,000. The other two programs—both of which are much larger than the previous three—were grouped at the high end of the range: King County, $412,000; and Washington, DC, $545,000. While it is difficult to make meaningful cost comparisons across programs, given the important differences among them, this information shows that the cost of the CMA program is aligned with that of other programs.

    Comparing budget items across programs is even more difficult, including because different programs categorize similar expenses differently. The CMA budgets approximately $20,000, or 15 percent of the total program budget, for marketing costs. The marketing costs of other programs for which we were able to obtain that information include San Francisco, $10,000; Solano/Napa, $11,400; King County, $30,000; and Boston, $20,000. For some of these programs, the marketing budget represents a larger percentage of total costs than it does under the CMA program, while for others it represents a smaller percentage. Again, while it is very difficult to compare budget items meaningfully across programs, this information shows that the marketing budget of the CMA program is in line with that of other programs.

    - To the extent that reducing costs is a priority for the Alameda County program, consider merging the Alameda County program with one or more other programs in the Bay Area, in order to serve a multi-county area. This has the potential of reducing total costs across the merged programs since expenses for some functions would not need to be duplicated and could benefit from economies of scale. To the extent that reducing costs is a priority, controlling the cost of rides is less important than controlling other costs such as administration, marketing and overhead: the cost of rides makes up only 8 percent of the total budget of the Alameda County program, whereas other costs constitute 92 percent.

---

15. **Funding sources:** Most of the programs, and all the ones in the Bay Area, are funded entirely or primarily through public sources, including in several cases the general funds of the sponsoring agencies. (In cases where the GRH program is operated as part of broader commute alternative efforts, it is not always possible to pinpoint the specific sources of funding used for the program.) All Bay Area GRH programs except for San Mateo County's receive grants from the BAAQMD–TFCA and three receive funding from the local half-cent sales tax for transportation. As described in more detail below, three programs receive direct

employer contributions. The Boston program is funded indirectly by employer contributions, through employers' membership dues to the transportation management association (TMA) that sponsors and administers that program.

- ▶ Chapter 5 includes funding-related recommendations for the Alameda County program. The main recommendation is to continue to rely exclusively on TFCA grants to fund the GRH program (see recommendation #1). Alternatively, the CMA could consider requiring employers to contribute toward the cost of the GRH program provided that certain conditions are in place (see recommendation #4).

---

16. **Employer contributions:** Three programs receive direct employer contributions toward the cost of individual rides or of the program overall. Under the San Francisco program, employers are responsible for 50 percent of expenses between $700 and $2,000 in annual ride costs and for 100 percent of expenses beyond $2,000; employers are also responsible for costs in excess of $200 per ride. The San Mateo County program requires employers to pay for 25 percent of the ride cost and for 100 percent of the cost beyond the first 25 miles of a taxi ride. Lastly, the King County program assesses an annual per-employee fee to large employers and a uniform fee to small employers to participate in the program (employers may also choose to pay for the program indirectly, by enrolling in a broader commute alternative program).

- ▶ Chapter 5 includes funding-related recommendations for the Alameda County program. The main recommendation is to continue to rely exclusively on TFCA grants to fund the GRH program (see recommendation #1). Alternatively, the CMA could consider requiring employers to contribute toward the cost of the GRH program provided that certain conditions are in place (see recommendation #4).

---

17. **Employee contributions:** All the programs cover the full cost of taxi fares, within any limits on ride distances, and also of rental car reservations until at least 9:30 am the morning following the ride. Four programs also cover the two main ride incidentals, namely taxi ride gratuities and fuel refills for car rentals. Two programs cover fuel refills but not gratuities, while programs, including Alameda County's, do not cover either expense.

- ▶ Extend expense coverage to include fuel refills and, possibly, taxi ride gratuities.

Supportive TDM Programs

18. With the notable exception of the CMA, all the sponsoring agencies of the GRH programs we researched offer additional TDM programs and services in the same service area that support the GRH program by providing other forms of encouragement for employees to use commute

alternatives. These programs and services typically include financial incentives for using transit, vanpools and carpools; ridesharing and ride-matching services; and promotions for walking and bicycling.

- Consider offering, either alone or in partnership with other counties, commute alternative programs and services alongside the GRH program beyond 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 (see recommendation #3 in Chapter 5). The CMA's *Congestion Management Program* recommends a number of such programs for Alameda County, as does its *Countywide Transportation Plan*. To fund these additional services, the CMA should investigate the county's sales tax for transportation, the TFCA and funding sources from other public agencies.

Chapter 2: Survey Effectiveness

Introduction

As part of program operations, Nelson\Nygaard distributes an annual survey to the representatives of employers who are registered in the GRH program and a separate annual survey to registered employees. The surveys are available both online (through SurveyMonkey.com) and on hard copy. The goal of this task is to review the design and administration of the two surveys (rather than the survey results), evaluate their effectiveness and make recommendations for improvements.

To carry out this task, we reviewed the online and hard-copy versions of both surveys and also the *Alameda County CMA Guaranteed Ride Home Program Evaluation—2007 Final* report (May 2008), prepared by Nelson\Nygaard, which devotes two chapters to the surveys. We examined the surveys with an eye toward improving the quality of information obtained through the surveys, improving the survey experience for respondents and raising the response rate (which would happen, in part, as a result of improving the survey experience).

We reviewed the surveys on two levels. The first is a narrower, more specific level related to individual questions and online survey "screens," with the objective of improving the meaning, tone and order of questions and the organization and flow of the screens. The second is a higher level addressing the central purpose and objectives of the surveys. In particular, it is especially important that the surveys be able to help the CMA board and staff evaluate the success and

performance of the GRH program against its three original guiding principles and also assist the BAAQMD in evaluating the potential for the GRH program to reduce air emissions. Of course, for the surveys to be useful, questions must be designed to prompt respondents to give revealing and truthful responses, rather than what they think the survey administrator wants or expects to hear. Sometimes this requires asking for the same information in more ways than one or asking a question in a way that "distances" the respondent from the survey administrator, enabling a more truthful response. How these things are being done in the current surveys is an issue that we also consider in our recommendations.

Survey Design and Administration

Chapters 4 and 5 of the *Alameda County CMA Guaranteed Ride Home Program Evaluation—2007 Final* report discuss the design, administration and results of the employee and employer representative surveys respectively. Below are summaries of how the latest annual surveys were designed and administered, as reported in the 2007 program evaluation report. The summaries are followed by key findings related to the administration of the surveys, also as reported in the 2007 program evaluation report. As mentioned earlier, this task does not address the results of the surveys.

Design and Administration of Employee Survey

The representatives of registered employers are contacted by e-mail and asked to distribute the employee survey among registered employees. The employer representatives are provided with a link to the online survey, a Word file of the survey, an e-mail list of registered employees and, to facilitate the process, sample e-mail text asking employees to complete and return the survey. Employer representatives who do not respond are contacted by phone and asked again to distribute the survey. The online version of the survey can be completed and returned through the link provided; the hard-copy version can be returned via e-mail, regular mail or fax. The hard-copy version of the employee survey administered in 2008 (in the spring) is shown in **Appendix A** (the online version was nearly identical).

The questions in the 2008 employee survey can be grouped into four categories, based on their objective:

- **Program effectiveness:** To gauge the impact of the GRH program on reducing single-occupancy driving.
- **Other commute characteristics:** To learn about employees' commute trips, such as distance, arrival and departure times and access mode.

- **Customer service ratings:** To learn employees' opinions about the quality of customer service provided by the administrative staff of the GRH program. (Opinions about the quality of customer service provided by the taxi and rental car companies are obtained separately, from the user evaluations completed and returned by employees after using a ride.)
- **Rental car requirement:** To find out if employees are aware of the program requirement that participants living 50 miles or more from their workplace must generally use a rental car. (Questions in this category were included in the survey in 2008 for the first time.)

The above information is regularly collected by the program through the post-ride user evaluations. However, the annual survey is able to obtain information from a sample of all registered employees, not just from those who used the program during the previous year. The annual survey provides the additional benefit of enabling the program to purge the database of employees who have left their employers or who no longer wish to be registered, based on feedback obtained by the employer representatives as they distribute the survey.

Design and Administration of Employer Representative Survey

The employer representative survey is distributed primarily through SurveyMonkey.com, with a paper version or electronic file available upon request. Like the employee survey, the employer representative survey is administered in the spring of each year. The hard-copy version of the employer representative survey administered in 2008 is shown in **Appendix B** (the online version was nearly identical).

As with the employee survey, the questions in the employer representative survey can be grouped into four categories, depending on their objective. Some questions were common to both surveys. The categories are:

- **Alternative mode:** To gauge the effect, in the mind of the employer representatives, of various factors on employees' commute choices, including the presence of the GRH program.
- **Program management:** To learn more about the experience of the employer representatives in managing the program.
- **Customer service ratings:** To assess the opinion of employer representatives on the quality of the customer service provided by the GRH program administrative staff.
- **Rental car requirement:** To find out if employer representatives are aware of the rental car requirement for employees who live 50 miles or more from their workplace.

Key Findings

Lastly, below are some key findings related to the administration of the 2008 employee and employer representative surveys, also as reported in the 2007 program evaluation report:

- Of the 728 employee surveys returned, 98 percent (710) were submitted online and only 2 percent (18) were received by hard copy (p. 4-1).
- The 728 surveys returned represent a 16 percent response rate, based on the 4,437 registered employees in the program's database (p. 4-1). This rate is approximately in the middle of the ten-year historical range, during which time it has varied from 12 percent (in 2000) to 22 percent (in 2003; p. ES-3).
- The responding employees represent 68 employers, or 44 percent of the 155 registered employers (p. 4-1). The 2007 program evaluation report did not provide such data for previous years.
- Of the 155 employer representative surveys distributed, 41 were returned, for a response rate of 26 percent (p. 5-1). The 2007 program evaluation report did not provide such data for previous years.

Recommendations—Employee Survey

Below are our recommendations for improving the effectiveness of the surveys. We discuss the employee survey first, in this section, followed by the employer representative survey in the next section. For each, we first discuss how the survey can be revised, if at all, to improve the collection of information for evaluating the success and performance of the GRH program against its guiding principles. (As explained below, one of the guiding principles also addresses the interests of the BAAQMD, which has been funding the program.) This is followed by more narrow and specific recommendations typically related to individual questions and screens. **Appendix C** contains our detailed edits suggested for various questions in both the employee and employer representative surveys.

Our comments and recommendations focus on, and refer to, the online versions of the surveys rather than to the hard-copy versions. This is for several reasons: the vast majority of surveys are returned online, the two versions are substantially the same and the comments and recommendations should be easily transferable to the hard-copy versions, as applicable.

Recommendations to Improve the Evaluation of Program Performance

- **Guiding principle ❶ (maximize shift from driving alone):** We do not recommend additional questions on the employee survey to evaluate this principle. The survey currently includes five questions designed to gauge the impact of the GRH program on reducing drive-alone trips among participants (questions #15-19). The questions try to get at essentially the same information—the extent to which the GRH program encourage employees to use commute

alternatives—by asking for it in several different ways. (It is worth noting that these questions also address the interest of the BAAQMD. In evaluating GRH programs and other ridesharing projects for TFCA funding, the BAAQMD bases its estimates of emissions reduced on a project's potential to encourage a shift in commuting behavior away from single-occupancy vehicles.) Asking for the same information in different ways provides a check against the tendency for respondents to provide "expected" responses (by the survey administrator) rather than truthful ones. The two questions asking respondents about their driving habits before and after joining the GRH program achieve the same effect by asking respondents to make an indirect comparison. The survey administrator can subsequently make a direct comparison between the "before" and "after" behavior by examining the responses to the two questions against each other.

Question #18 ("Does having a guaranteed ride home program available when you need it encourage you to rideshare, ride transit, bicycle, or walk MORE OFTEN than you would otherwise?") especially runs the risk of eliciting "expected" responses, especially by asking for a "Yes/No" answer. We suggest, first, that the question instead ask respondents to agree with a statement expressing the same idea, on a scale of "agree strongly," agree somewhat" and "do not agree." Second, the statement should ask employees for their opinion of the impact of the GRH program not on them but rather on colleagues who use or might use the program. An example of such a question is: "Do you agree with the following statement: The GRH program encourages others registered in the program to rideshare, ride transit, bicycle, or walk MORE OFTEN than they would otherwise." This provides an "out" for those who would answer "do not agree" but do not want to "disappoint" the survey administrator.

- **Guiding principle ❷ (value to employers and employees):** The information needed to evaluate this principle from the employees' perspective can be obtained in part from the questions that ask about the impact of the GRH program on their commute habits (questions #15-19) and, less directly, about their level of satisfaction with the program (question #4, on the quality of customer service). However, the survey should also include a question asking employees to compare the value of the GRH program to them to that of other transportation benefits provided by their employer, on a scale of "more valuable," "as valuable" and "less valuable." An answer choice of "not applicable" should be included for employees who do not receive any other transportation benefits from their employer.

- **Guiding principle ❸ (develop sustainable program):** The information needed to evaluate this guiding principle from the employees' perspective is, in our opinion, beyond the scope of the employee survey and best obtained through the general operation and administration of the program.

Other Recommendations to Improve the Clarity and Understanding of the Survey Questions

- **Screen #1, "Welcome!:"** The opening screen could discourage respondents from proceeding with the survey by being unnecessarily long. The reminder about the rental car requirement should be deleted as it does not belong in the introduction. Also, this screen should combine the shorter welcome message with the questions on the "Basic Information" page, in order to launch respondents directly into the survey itself.

- **Screen #2, "Basic Information:"** Explain on the bottom of the page that the asterisk before the first question means that this question requires an answer. Also, if the respondent's name and e-mail address are optional (questions #2 and #3), mention why this information is being asked. If the reason is to be able to respond to comments, these questions should be moved to the end of the survey since respondents will not know if they have comments until later in the survey. Either way, assure respondents of the anonymity of their answers.

- **Screen #3, "Customer Service Quality:"** Qualify the question on this page with "in the past year" or "in 2007." The wording of the second part of the question is leading ("Prompt and knowledgeable assistance") and should be re-worded to be more impartial; it might be re-worded simply as "Assistance when calling the GRH Hotline," for example, or "Response time and information received when calling the GRH hotline." Consider including a third part that asks about respondents' satisfaction with their employer representative. Also, consider including a comment box so that respondents can describe any "fair" or "poor" experiences. Lastly, the first part of the question is permanently shaded yellow, which is not consistent with the design of subsequent multi-part questions. Instead, allow both parts to become shaded temporarily when the cursor scrolls over them.

- **Screen #4, "Guaranteed Ride Home Program Use Characteristics:"** The purpose of question #5 ("How long have you been participating in the Guaranteed Ride Home Program?") is not clear since the results are not referenced in the annual program evaluation report. If the question is not necessary, it should be deleted. If it is retained, the word "participating" should be defined or should be replaced with "enrolled" or "registered." On questions #6 and #7, the order of the "Yes" and "No" choices is reversed; following convention, the "Yes" choice should be first in both cases. On question #7, instruct respondents answering "No" to skip to question #9. Also, question #7 belongs more properly on screen #5. On this screen, include a multiple-choice question asking respondents how they found out about the GRH program.

- **Screen #5, "Program Usage:"** Clarify that question #8 refers to the last voucher used or re-word it as "The last time you used your voucher, did you…;" otherwise, this question might be confusing to respondents who have used more than one voucher. A similar question on the hard-copy version of the survey is worded more clearly, asking the respondent to list the mode for the "most recent" ride.

- **Screen #6, "Rental Car Option:"** Question #9 has an accusatory tone ("why didn't you use a rental car?"). Re-word it as "...describe why you chose a taxi instead of a rental car?" The seventh answer choice ("I live less than 20 miles from my workplace") could be confusing to some people because it contradicts the question ("If you live more than 20 miles away from your workplace and have used a taxi for a guaranteed ride home, why didn't you use a rental car?"). To make it clear, change it to "Not applicable; I live less than 20 miles from my workplace."

- **Screen #7, "How You Travel to Work Now:"** Break up this screen into two so that respondents do not need to scroll down to reach the end. Question #12, for being so central to the survey, is confusingly written. Replace the term "At the present time" with "In a typical week," for more representative results. For the benefit of respondents who use more than one mode, describe "primary mode" as the mode on which the most time is spent. The parenthetical instructions should be taken out of parentheses and moved to after the question mark. The second part of the question ("if you travel more or fewer days, just enter '5' next to your usual mode") contradicts the first part by assuming that the respondent has a usual commute mode. Instead, the question should accept that some respondents work fewer than five days a week and should be re-worded to encourage respondents to "enter a number next to each mode so that the numbers add up to the number of days you work in a typical week (1-5)."

- **Screen #8, "How You Traveled to Work Before GRH:"** Our comments for question #15 are similar to those for question #12, above.

- **Screen #9, "Influence of GRH Program:"** On the first option under question #17, replace "go back to driving alone" to "drive alone;" as currently written, the question assumes that the respondent was driving alone before. Also, define "ridesharing" and "transit" only once on the page, at the beginning.

- **Screen #10, "Comments:"** Replace the term "write down" with a word with a more appropriate tone for the survey, such as "provide."

- **General:** Because the survey is currently organized into 11 screens, the progress tracking bar increases in increments of 9 percent (9%, 18%, 27%, etc.). Instead, reorganize the survey into 10 screens—like the employer representative survey—to make the progress tracking more predictable and easier to follow (10%, 20%, 30%, etc.).

- **General:** It is confusing that both screens and questions are numbered. Omit the numbers on screens or order them using letters. This comment also applies to the employer representative survey.

- **General:** Make the look of the survey more interesting, attractive and inviting using a SurveyMonkey template. This comment also applies to the employer representative survey.

- **General:** To increase the survey response rate, consider entering the respondents in a drawing for one or more prizes (for a transit pass, Commuter Check or gift certificate to an online retailer, for example). This incentive should be mentioned in all survey announcements and in the opening screen of the survey.

Recommendations—Employer Representative Survey

Recommendations to Improve the Evaluation of Program Performance

- **Guiding principle ❶ (maximize shift from driving alone):** The survey currently asks the following "Yes"/"No" question: "Do you feel that having the GRH program available encourages employees to commute to work using alternative modes of transportation more often?" (question #11). This question would be more valuable if it asked employer representatives to agree with a statement expressing the same idea, on a scale of "agree strongly," agree somewhat" and "do not agree." Alternatively, the question could ask respondents, in their opinion, how important the GRH program is in encouraging commute alternatives among their employees, on a scale of "very important," "somewhat important" and "not at all important."

- **Guiding principle ❷ (value to employers and employees):** The information needed to evaluate the value that employers and employees place on the GRH program can be obtained partly using the questions recommended immediately above and below and also from existing questions that ask about employers' satisfaction with the program (especially question #3, on the quality of customer service). However, to try to gauge the value of the program to employers more directly, we suggest three new questions following question #8 (transportation subsidies). The first question would ask employer representatives how valuable they consider the GRH program to be to their employees compared to any other transportation benefits provided by the employer. The second and third questions would ask representatives the likelihood—on a scale of "very likely," "somewhat likely" and "not likely"—that their organization would continue to participate in the GRH program if it was required to pay for: (second question) at least half of each employee's guaranteed ride home, up to $50 per ride; and, (third question) its share of the total cost of the program. For the second question, it should be explained that total program cost includes administration and marketing and is much higher than simply the cost of rides provided and that the fee would be $500-$1,500 per employer annually, depending on employer size. A question similar to these has been asked previously at least once, in the employer representative survey conducted in 2004: "Would your company participate in the program if GRH charged a minimal annual fee for each employee registered with the program?"

- **Guiding principle ❸ (develop sustainable program):** One of the issues behind developing a sustainable GRH program is whether to require employers to contribute toward the costs of the program. Employers' willingness to pay for the program could be gauged through questions (1) and (2) suggested above.

Other Recommendations to Improve the Clarity and Understanding of the Survey Questions

- **Screen #1, "Introduction:"** Be more explicit about the length of the survey. Instead of saying "This survey is very brief and will only take a few minutes," mention that the "survey has [number] questions and is intended to take 5-10 minutes to complete." More concrete information would likely be appreciated by respondents and might result in a higher response rate. This comment should also be applied to the employee survey.

- **Screen #2, "Program Clarification:"** Because this screen does not include a question, it appears out of place and could discourage respondents from proceeding with the survey. Instead, delete it and include the information on screen #5, which includes questions addressing the same issue of the rental car requirement.

- **Screen #3, "Company Information:"** For question #2 (name), see our comments above for questions #2 and #3 in the employee survey.

- **Screen #4, "Customer Service:"** For question #3 (quality of customer service), see our comments above for screen #3 of the employee survey.

- **Screen #6, "About Your Role:"** Break up this screen into two so that respondents do not need to scroll down to reach the end. Also, question #6 ("How long have you been the Guaranteed Ride Home employer representative for your company/organization?") is somewhat out of order and would be more appropriate on screen #3. Question #8 (transportation subsidies) should be expanded into a multiple-choice question asking about any commute-related employee benefits provided by the company; it should include not only subsidies but also other transportation benefits such as a workplace shuttle and free parking. Question #10 ("Do you inform new employees about the program?") should include a comment field to allow explanation of a "No" answer. Question #11 ("Do you feel that having the GRH program available encourages employees to commute to work using alternative modes of transportation more often?") should be re-worded as "How important do you feel…;" instead of "Yes"/"No," the answer options should be "Very important," "Somewhat important" and "Not at all important."

- **Screen #7, "Request for more materials:"** This screen should be combined with screen #8 ("More materials requested") and cover questions #14-#16. On question #14, instruct respondents answering "No" to skip to question #17.

- **Screen #9, "Program Refresher:"** This screen feels superfluous because the text on it is so brief. Instead, incorporate question #17 (need for brief refresher) into screen #7.
- **Screen #10, "Additional Comments:"** Conclude the survey by thanking employer representatives for responding.

Chapter 3: Program Principles

Introduction

On January 29, 1998, shortly before the launch of the GRH program, the CMA Board adopted a set of principles to guide the development and operation of the program. The three guiding principles for the program are:

❶ Maximize shift from driving alone to transit, carpooling, bicycling and walking

❷ Determine value of GRH to employers and employees

❸ Develop a sustainable program (if possible)

The purpose of this task is to assess the historical performance of the GRH program against the program's original guiding principles. We carried out this task in three steps. First, we explored the meaning of the three principles, in order to clarify the intentions of the CMA board. For each principle, we then established two performance measures that reflect the intentions behind the principles. Lastly, we assessed the performance of different aspects of the GRH program against those measures using data obtained from past annual evaluation reports for the program. Below is an evaluation of each guiding principle, concluding with key findings related to our evaluation.

Guiding Principle ❶

Maximize shift from driving alone to transit, carpooling, bicycling and walking

This principle expresses the fundamental objective of the GRH program. The program was created expressly to encourage employees to use commute alternatives—including transit, carpools, vanpools, bicycling and walking—instead of driving alone. The program's objective reflects the fact that a shift from single-occupancy vehicles to alternative commute modes has a number of public benefits. One of these is reduced traffic congestion, a key reason why the CMA chose to create the GRH program and continues to sponsor it. Another benefit is cleaner air, which explains why the BAAQMD has funded the program since its inception.

To assess the performance of the GRH program against this guiding principle, we established two performance measures related to the program's potential to encourage participating employees to shift from driving alone to using alternative modes of transportation for their commute. Below are the two performance measures, along with our evaluation of the program's performance under each one.

- **Performance Measure 1.1: Effectiveness in changing commute behavior of program participants**

  The annual survey distributed among employees registered in the GRH program has historically asked several questions designed to gauge the impact of the program on reducing drive-alone trips among participants. Specifically, the survey asks respondents:

  - *If you drove alone before joining GRH, how important was the GRH program in your decision to begin ridesharing, riding transit, bicycling, and walking for your commute to work?*
  - *Does having a guaranteed ride home program available when you need it encourage you to rideshare (driving with one or more other people in the car carpooling or vanpooling) ride transit (ferry, bus, train, BART, ACE Train, or shuttle) bicycle or walk more often than you would otherwise?*
  - *If the Guaranteed Ride Home Program were not available would you (check one): Stop ridesharing, riding transit, bicycling, or walking and go back to driving alone; Continue ridesharing, riding transit, bicycling, or walking but less frequently than before; Continue ridesharing, riding transit, bicycling, or walking at the same frequency as before?*

  In addition, the survey asks respondents what their primary transportation mode to work is now and what it was before joining the program (both to be answered in number of days per week). This provides insight into the extent to which the commute modes of respondents have

changed as a result of joining the GRH program. Below are the results for these questions in the survey administered in 2008, along with some relevant historical data:

- Combined, 69 percent of respondents said that the program was at least somewhat important in their decision to begin using a commute alternative. This includes 19 percent who said that the GRH program was "very important" in their decision to begin using a commute alternative, meaning that "it was the main reason for my switch;" 29 percent who said that the program was "an important part of my decision;" and 21 percent who said it was "somewhat important (it had some influence)." The remaining 31 percent said it was "not important (I began using alternative modes for other reasons)." Since this question was first asked in the employee survey in 2003, the combined figure for "very important," "important" and somewhat important" has never been lower than 68 percent.

- 61 percent said that having a GRH program encourages them to use a commute alternative more often than they would otherwise. The remaining 39 percent said that it did not. Historically, the "Yes" figure has never been lower than 57 percent.

- Combined, 41 percent of respondents said that they would stop using a commute alternative, or use it less frequently, and revert to driving alone if the GRH program were not available. This includes 13 percent who said that they would stop using a commute alternative altogether and 28 percent who said that they would continue using a commute alternative but less frequently than before. The remaining 59 percent said that they would continue using a commute alternative at the same frequency as before. The combined figure of 41 percent who would stop using a commute alternative or use it less frequently was more than double what it was in the program's early years: 15 percent in 1998, 16 percent in 1999 and 19 percent in 2000 and 2001. Historically, the figure for those who would continue using a commute alternative at the same frequency as before has been as high as 66 percent and has never dropped below 53 percent.

- 13 percent said that if the GRH program were not available they would stop using a commute alternative and go back to driving alone; 28 percent said that they would continue using a commute alternative but less frequently than before; and 59 percent said that they would continue using a commute alternative at the same frequency as before. The combined figure of 41 percent who would stop using a commute alternative or use it less frequently was more than double what it was in the program's early years: 15 percent in 1998, 16 percent in 1999 and 19 percent in 2000 and 2001. Historically, the figure for those who would continue using a commute alternative at the same frequency as before has been as high as 66 percent and has never dropped below 53 percent.

- The percentage of respondents using a commute alternative five days a week increased from 48 percent before joining the GRH program to 63 percent after. At the other extreme,

the percentage of respondents who never used a commute alternative before joining the GRH program (that is, zero days a week) decreased from 33 percent to 15 percent. The way in which responses to this question have been reported in the annual program evaluations has changed over the years, making a historical comparison difficult.

These results broadly suggest, using several criteria, that the GRH program encourages participating employees to shift from driving alone to using alternative modes of transportation for their commute. For example, a combined 69 percent of respondents said the program was at least somewhat important in their decision to begin using a commute alternative, while 61 percent said that having a GRH program encourages them to use a commute alternative more often than they would otherwise. Similarly, the percentage of respondents using a commute alternative five days a week increased from 48 percent before joining the GRH program to 63 percent after, while the percentage of respondents who *never* used a commute alternative before joining the program decreased from 33 percent to 15 percent.

The one finding that gives pause is that 59 percent of survey respondents would continue using a commute alternative at the same frequency as before even if the GRH program was no longer available. This could signal that the program is not important in changing the behavior of a large percentage of respondents. However, it could also be interpreted differently: that participants in the GRH program are committed to using commute alternatives and that the program is part of, and supports, their commitment. This interpretation is supported by the high percentage (69 percent) of respondents who said that the GRH program was "very important" in their decision to begin using a commute alternative, combined with the low percentage (13 percent) of respondents who would stop using a commute alternative and go back to driving alone if the GRH program were not available. Additional support for the program's effectiveness at changing commute behavior is provided by its success in reducing emissions of air pollutants, as discussed below under Performance Measure 1.2.

- **Performance Measure 1.2: Reductions in emissions of air quality pollutants**

Given the direct relationship between driving and air pollution, the effectiveness of the GRH program in modifying the commuting behavior of employees should be reflected in its success at reducing emissions of air quality pollutants. Fortunately, we have a way to quantify the success of the GRH program in this area. The program has been funded since its inception through grants from the BAAQMD's Transportation Fund for Clean Air (TFCA). The TFCA is funded by a $4 surcharge on motor vehicles registered in the Bay Area and its purpose is to provide grants to public agencies to implement projects in the Bay Area that will decrease motor vehicle emissions—and thereby improve air quality—in a cost-effective manner.

In fiscal year 2007/08, the BAAQMD awarded a TFCA grant in the amount of $270,000 to the CMA to operate the Alameda County GRH program for two years. The BAAQMD requires that all projects receiving TFCA funds achieve a cost-effectiveness of $90,000 or less in TFCA funding per ton of emissions reduced.[9] The cost-effectiveness of the TFCA grant given in fiscal year 2007/08 to the Alameda County GRH program was $16,591 per ton.[10] That figure is well below the ceiling set by the BAAQMD and made the GRH program the fourth most cost-effective of 42 projects evaluated that year that were submitted through the County Program Manager Fund.[11, 12]

Perhaps more importantly, the average cost-effectiveness of the 15 other projects under the ridesharing category—which includes the GRH program—that were submitted that year from all Bay Area counties through the TFCA's County Program Manager Fund was $35,369.[13] In other words, the GRH program was more than twice as cost-effective as the other ridesharing projects. For ridesharing projects, the BAAQMD bases its estimates of emissions reduced on a project's potential to encourage a shift in commuting behavior away from single-occupancy vehicles. This means that, in comparison to other projects funded that year through the TFCA's County Program Manager Fund, the GRH program must be considered significantly more effective at promoting a shift from driving alone to using commute alternatives.

---

[9] The cost-effectiveness is calculated by dividing the amount of TFCA funds allocated to a project by the estimated reductions in emissions of criteria air pollutants (ROG, NOx, and PM10) achieved by the project over its lifetime. For non-capital projects such as GRH programs, "lifetime" is defined as the period of time for which funding is being provided to operate the project.

[10] "Transportation Fund for Clean Air County Program Manager Expenditure Plans: Fiscal Year 2007/2008, and Certain Prior Fiscal Years" (BAAQMD staff memorandum to Board committee, July 11, 2007), table 1, p. 1.

[11] Ibid, table 1.

[12] TFCA funds are available through two channels: the Regional Fund and the County Program Manager Fund. The Regional Fund, which comprises approximately 60 percent of TFCA revenues, is allocated directly by the BAAQMD. The County Program Manager Fund disburses the remaining TFCA revenues, approximately 40 percent. Although funding decisions under the County Program Manager Fund are made by each of the nine Bay Area county Congestion Management Agencies (CMAs), projects selected for funding by the CMAs must meet basic TFCA eligibility requirements and be approved by the BAAQMD.

[13] Ibid, tables 1 and 2; per our calculation.

Guiding Principle ❷

Determine value of GRH to employers and employees

We interpret this principle as "Provide value to employers and employees," meaning that the CMA intended for the GRH program to become a valuable benefit for employers in Alameda County and their employees. In addition to its public benefits—mentioned in the previous section—the GRH program offers a number of potential workplace benefits to its users. For employees, these include monetary savings of commute alternatives over driving alone; free time on transit, social time in carpools and vanpools, and exercise time when bicycling or walking to work; greater peace of mind when using a commute alternative; and, of course, the actual cost of any emergency rides taken. For employers, benefits include employees' increased flexibility to work unscheduled overtime hours; improved employee productivity, to the extent that workers are more satisfied as a result of the benefits they derive from the GRH program; and an enhanced ability to retain employees by adding to the suite of employee benefits they offer. To assess the effectiveness of the GRH program in providing value to employers and employees, we established and evaluated the following two performance measures:

- **Performance Measure 2.1: Employee satisfaction with the program**

  Unfortunately, the program does not collect, and we do not have, quantitative or qualitative information on the "value" that employees place on such aspects as time or monetary savings from participating in the GRH program. However, the statistics discussed under performance measure 1.1, "Effectiveness in changing commute behavior of program participants," broadly indicate that employees are availing themselves of the GRH program and, therefore, deriving value from it. In addition, the annual survey distributed among employees registered in the GRH program and the post-ride evaluation questionnaires both provide some insight into their level of satisfaction with the program. Specifically, the survey asks employees to "Please rate the quality of customer service you have received" on two aspects of the program:

  - *Clarity of information provided about how the program works.* Among respondents of the survey administered in 2008, 83 percent stated that the customer service they received was either "excellent" (41 percent) or "good" (42 percent). An additional 6 percent answered "fair," 1 percent answered "poor" and 10 percent answered "don't know." Since the first employee survey was administered in 1999, the combined figure for "fair" and "poor" ratings has never exceeded 10 percent and the figure for "poor" has never exceeded 2 percent.

  - *Prompt and knowledgeable assistance when calling the GRH Hotline.* On this question, 25 percent answered "excellent" (14 percent) or "good" (11 percent), 1 percent answered "fair" and 0 percent answered "poor." The remainder—a majority of 73 percent—answered "don't

know." This could be explained by the fact that the clarity of information provided about the GRH program is good enough to begin with that most program participant have never needed to call the hotline for further assistance. Historically, the combined figure for "fair" and "poor" ratings has exceeded 3 percent only once and the figure for "poor" has never exceeded 1 percent.

In addition, the program collects information on employees' satisfaction from the post-ride follow-up questionnaires. Among those who responded to questionnaires in 2007, 80 percent rated their overall program experience and quality of service as either "good" or "excellent." While high, this result is down significantly from 2006, when 95 percent rated the service as good or excellent. Also in 2007, large majorities reported that taxi drivers and rental car agents were friendly and helpful (93 percent) and that vehicles were clean (97 percent). Regarding rental cars, 61 percent of participants rated the service as excellent, 31 percent rated it as good, and 8 percent as fair.

Concerning wait time—perhaps the most important measure of satisfaction—55 percent of taxi passengers in 2007 reported 15 minutes or less; 19 percent waited 16-30 minutes; and 26 percent waited more than 30 minutes; average wait time was 20 minutes. Historically, the percentage of passengers waiting more than 15 minutes has ranged from 21 to 45 percent, with the highest figure reported for 2007. The percentage waiting more than 30 minutes has ranged from 4 to 26 percent, again with the highest figure reported for 2007. Average wait time has ranged from 11 to 20 minutes. In recent years, this figure appears to be trending up: 12 minutes for 2005, 14 minutes for 2006 and 20 minutes for 2007. Wait times are similar among users of rental cars: of 13 respondents, six (46 percent) waited less than 15 minutes for their rental car, four (31 percent) waited 16-30 minutes and three (23 percent) waited over 30 minutes.

The picture on value assigned by employees to the program is incomplete. Most of the results indicate a high level of satisfaction with the GRH program among registered employees and active users. However, on possibly the most important measure—wait time for taxis—performance seems to have deteriorated in recent years and particularly in 2007. Having over a quarter of respondents reported waiting more than 30 minutes is a negative mark for a program that exists to serve participants in case of an emergency. On this issue, we recommend that the program administrator work with the three contracting taxi companies and with the rental car company to identify measures to improve employees' wait times.

Unfortunately, employee satisfaction is not an adequate proxy for "valuation" of the program. Because the program does not collect, and we do not have, quantitative or qualitative information on the value that employees place on such aspects as time or monetary savings

from participating in the GRH program, we cannot make a conclusive determination about it. In Chapter 2 ("Survey Effectiveness") we suggest ways to collect information through the annual employee survey that could be used in the future to determine the value that employees assign to the program.

- **Performance Measure 2.2: Employer satisfaction with the program**

  Similarly to the above, the annual survey distributed among representatives of employers registered in the GRH program provides information about employers' level of satisfaction with the program, but not how much they value it. Among the questions asked of employer representatives, the survey asks:

  - *Do you feel that having the GRH program available encourages employees to use alternative modes of transportation more often for their work trip?* A large majority of respondents—87 percent—answered "Yes," while only 13 percent answered "No." Since the first employer representative survey was administered in 2004, the "Yes" figure has been as high as 95 percent and has never been lower than 79 percent.

  - *How would you describe the amount of work you spend administering the GRH program?* All respondents stated that their GRH program-related workload is either "manageable" (24 percent) or "not much work" (76 percent). Zero percent responded that it was "too much work." Historically, the figure for "too much work" has never exceeded 2 percent.

  - *Please rate the quality of customer service you have received* [regarding] *clarity of information provided about how the program works* [and] *prompt and knowledgeable assistance when calling the GRH Hotline.* Concerning clarity of information, 92 percent of respondents stated that the customer service they received was either "excellent" (56 percent) or "good" (36 percent); only 3 percent answered "fair," zero percent answered "poor" and 5 percent answered "don't know." Historically, the combined figure for "excellent" and "good" ratings has never been lower than 92 percent and the combined figure for "fair" and "poor" ratings has never exceeded 3 percent.

    Concerning assistance when calling the GRH hotline, 52 percent responded either "excellent" (34 percent) or "good" (18 percent) customer service. The remainder—a large 47 percent—answered "don't know;" this could reflect the fact that many employer representatives never need to call the hotline because the GRH materials are easy enough to understand in the first place. Historically, the combined figure for "fair" and "poor" ratings has always been 0 percent.

These results uniformly indicate a very high level of satisfaction among employers with the GRH program. Again, however, employer satisfaction is unfortunately not an adequate proxy for the

value that employers place on benefits of the program such as time savings, monetary savings or greater peace of mind for their employees, employees' increased flexibility to work unscheduled overtime hours, improved employee productivity (to the extent that workers are more satisfied as a result of the benefits they derive from the GRH program) or an enhanced ability to retain workers by offering them an additional employee benefits. Because the program does not collect, and we do not have, quantitative or qualitative information on employers' "valuation" of the program, we cannot make a conclusive determination about it. In Chapter 2 ("Survey Effectiveness"), we suggest ways to collect information through the annual employee survey that could be used in the future to determine the value that employers assign to the program.

Guiding Principle ❸

Develop a sustainable program (if possible)

In this case, we interpret the intention of the CMA board as wanting to create a program that would operate continuously for a relatively long period of time—for at least several years beyond a start-up or pilot phase—supported by one or more sufficiently secure and reliable sources of funding. To assess the success of the GRH program in being or becoming financially sustainable, we established and evaluated the following two performance measures:

- **Performance Measure 3.1: Long-term continuous operation beyond start-up phase**

  In April 1998, at the inception of the GRH program, its future was unclear, as evidenced by the board's guiding principles. Since then, the program has operated continuously, with no interruptions, for ten and a half years. During that time:

  - A total of 225 employers have registered with the program and the year-end number of registered employers has more than doubled, from 72 in 1998 to 155 in 2007.
  - Over 6,000 employees have registered with the program and the year-end number of actively enrolled employees has increased more than five-fold, from 880 to 4,437.
  - The program has provided 1,250 rides and the annual number of rides provided has almost doubled, from 57 to 98.

- In the four-year period encompassing 2004-2007, the program resulted in almost 1.3 million drive-alone one-way trips being replaced by alternative mode trips by participants in the program.[14]

These statistics illustrate a program that has grown at a pace healthy enough to suggest continued interest on the part of employers and employees but not so fast as to overwhelm the program financially or administratively. Looking back to 1998 from 2008, and using the above performance measure, it appears that the CMA succeeded in creating a sustainable program.

- **Performance Measure 3.2: Support from one or more secure and reliable funding sources**

A key factor in assuring the continuous operation of any program is a reliable source or sources of funds. The GRH program has been funded since its inception entirely through grants from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's Transportation Fund for Clean Air (BAAQMD–TFCA). This can be viewed both as a positive and as a negative. On one hand, the grants have enabled the program to operate without interruption and demonstrate continued support from the BAAQMD. The program ranks highly under the TFCA's scoring criteria and guidelines so it does not appear to be in danger of losing out to competing projects. The BAAQMD requires that all projects receiving TFCA funds achieve a cost-effectiveness of $90,000 or less in TFCA funding per ton of emissions reduced. The cost-effectiveness of the TFCA grant given in fiscal year 2007/08 to the Alameda County GRH program was $16,591 per ton. That figure is well below the ceiling set by the BAAQMD and made the GRH program the fourth most cost-effective of 42 projects evaluated that year that were submitted through the County Program Manager Fund.

On the other hand, reliance on a single source of funds is risky. While the GRH program does not appear to be in danger of losing out to competing projects for TFCA funds, it is possible that in future years the BAAQMD will change TFCA funding criteria in a way that would make the GRH program ineligible for funding or less likely to be fully funded. It is also possible, though unlikely, that the TFCA will be terminated (it exists at the discretion of the state legislature), that its funds will be sufficiently reduced to make even high-scoring projects ineligible for funds or that enough other projects will outscore the GRH program in the competition for the limited funds available. Any of these developments would leave the GRH program stranded. Ultimately, a stream of multiple reliable funding sources would advance the financial sustainability and long-term viability of the GRH program further than dependence on a single source of funds. Under this performance measure, the GRH program

[14] Nelson\Nygaard, as reported in their annual program evaluation reports for the CMA GRH program (p. 4-6 in the case of every report).

has been only partly successful: while it has managed to secure funding for the past ten years from the same source, it has not developed additional sources of funding.

Key Findings

Below are the key findings, or conclusions, from our evaluation of the performance of the GRH program against its original guiding principles.

Guiding Principle ❶: Maximize shift from driving alone to transit, carpooling, bicycling and walking

Performance Measure 1.1: Effectiveness in changing commute behavior of program participants

Various results from the annual employee survey broadly indicate that the GRH program encourages participating employees to shift from driving alone to using alternative modes of transportation for their commute. While there is one finding that gives pause, there are sufficient other data points to indicate that the GRH program has a positive effect in encouraging employees to make desired changes in commuting behavior. Additional support for the program's effectiveness at changing commute behavior is provided by its success in reducing emissions of air pollutants, as mentioned elsewhere.

Performance Measure 1.2: Reductions in emissions of air quality pollutants

According to BAAQMD evaluations, the GRH program was more than twice as cost-effective at reducing air emissions as the other ridesharing projects funded through the BAAQMD-TFCA County Program Manager Fund in fiscal year 2007/08. For ridesharing projects, the BAAQMD bases cost-effectiveness on a project's potential to encourage a shift in commuting behavior away from single-occupancy vehicles. This indicates that the GRH program was very effective at promoting such a shift.

Guiding Principle ❷: Determine value of GRH to employers and employees

Performance Measure 2.1: Employee satisfaction with the program

Most of the results indicate a high level of satisfaction with the GRH program among registered employees and active users. Unfortunately, employee satisfaction is not an adequate proxy for employee "valuation" of the program. Because the program does not collect, and we do not have, quantitative or qualitative information on the value that employees place on such aspects as time or monetary savings from participating in the GRH program, we cannot make a conclusive

determination about it. In Chapter 2 ("Survey Effectiveness") we recommend additional questions for the annual employee survey that could provide information to allow determination in the future of the value that employees assign to the program. On a separate issue, we also recommend that the program administrator work with the three contracting taxi companies and with the rental car company to identify measures to improve employees' wait times.

Performance Measure 2.2: Employer satisfaction with the program

Similarly to the above, while the survey results indicate a uniformly high level of satisfaction among employer representatives, satisfaction is not an adequate proxy for employer "valuation" of the program. Because the program does not collect, and we do not have, quantitative or qualitative information on the value that employers place on such aspects as time or monetary savings from participating in the GRH program, we cannot make a conclusive determination about it. In Chapter 2 ("Survey Effectiveness") we recommend additional questions for the annual employer representative survey that could provide information to allow determination in the future of the value that employers assign to the program.

Guiding Principle ❸: Develop a sustainable program (if possible)

Performance Measure 3.1: Long-term continuous operation beyond start-up phase

While its future was unclear at its inception, the GRH program has managed to operate continuously, with no interruptions, for ten and a half years. During that time the program has grown at a pace healthy enough to suggest continued interest on the part of employers and employees but not so fast as to ever have overwhelmed the program financially or administratively.

Performance Measure 3.2: Support from one or more secure and reliable funding sources

Performance under this measure is mixed. The GRH program has successfully managed to secure sufficient funding to operate for each of the past ten years. However, all program funding has come from a single source, meaning that the program has never been able to develop additional sources of funding. The next chapter of this report discusses alternative funding strategies for the GRH program.

Chapter 4: Alternative Funding Strategies

Introduction

Since its inception ten years ago, the GRH program has been funded entirely through grants from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's Transportation Fund for Clean Air (BAAQMD–TFCA). The goal of this task is to explore alternative funding strategies, in order to ensure the program's financial sustainability and long-term viability. The CMA Board is particularly interested in reducing the program's dependence on public funds and shifting some of its costs to employers, since they are partly responsible for creating the need for commute alternative programs and have enjoyed the benefits of the GRH program at no cost for ten years. In addition, all else being equal, the GRH program would be on surer footing if it was able to rely on more than a single source of funds.

To assist the CMA in making a decision concerning program funding, the following section examines the funding strategies used by a number of other GRH-type programs—from here on referred to simply as "GRH programs"—both within the Bay Area and beyond. This is followed by a more in-depth discussion of the funding strategy employed by the Alameda County program. Our recommendations concerning program funding are presented in Chapter 5, "Overall Program Recommendations."

Funding Strategies of Other GRH Programs

Under the task described in Chapter 1, we conducted a detailed comparison of nine GRH programs (including the Alameda County program) across a number of key dimensions. Under this task, we looked at the funding strategies of three additional programs, for a total of twelve programs, which are listed below. Six operate in the Bay Area, two are from elsewhere in California and four are from elsewhere in the United States.

Bay Area

- Alameda County
- Contra Costa County
- San Francisco
- San Mateo County
- Solano/Napa counties
- Santa Rosa (Sonoma County)

Other California

- Central Sacramento (city)
- Southern California

Other United States

- King County, WA (Seattle)
- Austin (TX)
- Central Boston (MA)
- Washington, DC area

Below is an overview of the funding aspects of the eleven non-CMA programs. The information was gathered from program materials available online; through phone and e-mail exchanges with GRH program managers or coordinators; and from a 2008 Nelson\Nygaard report entitled *Guaranteed Ride Home Peer Review,* which compares the administrative aspects of Bay Area GRH programs. This is followed by a more detailed look at the funding strategy of the CMA program.

Contra Costa County

In recent years, the Contra Costa County GRH program has been funded through a combination of TFCA grants and the County's half-cent sales tax for transportation (a portion of which is dedicated for a variety of commute alternative programs). The GRH program receives no contributions from either employers or employees. The program pays for the full cost of taxi rides and 24-hour car rentals, including bridge tolls and a 10 percent taxi tip, but does not cover gasoline refill for the rental car.

San Francisco

The San Francisco program is funded through a combination of TFCA grants, the local half-cent sales tax for transportation (which includes funding for a variety of transportation and parking demand management programs), other City and County funds and employer contributions. The San Francisco program is one of only two in the Bay Area that receives employer contributions, the other being in San Mateo County. The program pays for: taxi fare up to $200, not including

tips; 24-hour car rental up to $60, plus insurance, but not including gasoline; car-share rides up to 200 miles and $200; and public transit fare. Employers have an annual allowance of $700 for eligible ride costs. Between $700 and $2,000 in annual ride costs per employer, the program pays for 50 percent of rides; the program does not cover any costs beyond $2,000 per year for a given employer. The program reports some added administrative burden associated with tracking reimbursement limits, especially each employer's annual allowance.

San Mateo County

The San Mateo program is the only one in the Bay Area that does not receive TFCA funding. Instead, it is funded primarily through the local half-cent sales tax for transportation (which includes funding for a variety of "alternative congestion relief" programs) and, to a much lesser extent, employer contributions. The program pays for 75 percent of the cost of a taxi ride or 24-hour car rental, with employers picking up the remaining 25 percent, with one exception: employees are responsible for the cost of taxi rides beyond the first 25 miles. The program pays for tips and bridge tolls in taxi rides but not gasoline refills or bridge tolls in rental-car rides. Lastly, the program pays $20 to co-workers for providing an emergency ride home and also covers the cost of transit tickets should the employee choose to use public transit to get home.

Solano/Napa counties

The Solano/Napa program is funded through a TFCA grant, but rides originating in eastern Solano County are paid for by the Sacramento Area Council of Government from its Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement funds. The program receives no contributions from either employers or employees. The program pays for the full cost of taxi rides and 24-hour car rentals, including a 10 percent taxi tip and one tank of gasoline.

Santa Rosa (Sonoma County)

Santa Rosa's program is entirely funded through a TFCA grant; it receives no employer or employee contributions. The program covers taxi rides only and it pays for the full cost of rides, including a 15 percent tip.

Central Sacramento (City)

The Sacramento Transportation Management Association (STMA) operates a GRH program for employers in central Sacramento. The program is entirely funded through employer membership dues to the STMA.[15] The program pays for taxi rides (including a 10 percent tip) or up to $48 for a

[15] The STMA has 162 employer members. Members pay annual dues of $250–$5,000, depending on the number of employees. Information obtained at www.sacramento-tma.org.

rental car (required for rides longer than 15 miles). Employees are responsible for costs in excess of that limit and for gasoline refills.

Southern California

The largest GRH program in the state is sponsored and funded jointly by four countywide public agencies in Southern California collaborating as the CommuteSmart partnership. These agencies are the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, Orange County Transportation Authority, Riverside County Transportation Commission and San Bernardino Associated Governments. (The Ventura County Transportation Commission is also a CommuteSmart partner but operates its own GRH program.) The GRH program is funded along with several other commute alternative programs offered by CommuteSmart through a variety of sources. Sources include grants from the South Coast Air Quality Management District (through a program similar to the BAAQMD-TFCA), local half-cent sales taxes for transportation and the agencies' general funds. The CommuteSmart GRH program pays for the full cost of taxi rides and 24-hour car rentals, including tips and gasoline.

King County, WA (Seattle)

The program in King County, Washington, registers employers (and other groups), though not individuals, and charges them for participation in the program. More commonly, employers pay for the program indirectly, by enrolling in Metro's broader "FlexPass" program, which offers a number of commute alternative services in addition to the GRH program. The annual price of a FlexPass varies by municipality within King County and by the package of commute benefits chosen but generally ranges from $50 to $500 per employee. For the GRH program only, the fee for the first six months of enrollment is $2.60 per employee for companies with more than 100 employees and is assessed over the total number of employees; smaller firms are charged a uniform fee, regardless of the number of employees. The per-employee-fee for a particular employer may be raised if employee usage during the first six months exceeds the total paid in fees. The employer fees are set so as to cover the full cost of the GRH program. The program is able to keep costs low by spreading use of its services over a large base of non-self-selected individuals.[16] The program covers taxi rides only and pays for the full cost of each ride.

Austin (TX)

The Austin GRH program is funded by the Capital Metro transit agency and is available to anyone who uses transit, vanpools or carpools in the agency's service area. The program is

[16] This arrangement avoids the risk of "adverse selection," or the tendency to attract people who are more likely to need and use the guaranteed rides home.

funded as part of Capital Metro's broader RideShare Department through a local one-cent sales tax for transportation. The program receives no contributions from employers but does charge individual participants $5 annually, a fee that entitles them to four emergency taxi rides per year. The program pays up to $48.50 per fare, including tip.

Central Boston (MA)

The program serving employers in central Boston is sponsored by the area transportation management association, called A Better City (ABC). All commute alternative programs offered by ABC—including not only the GRH but also ride-matching services, financial incentives for vanpooling and carpooling, and promotions for walking and bicycling—are funded entirely through employers' membership dues to the association. The program contracts with a car-for-hire (or "livery") service (which operates hybrid vehicles only) as the sole provider of rides. The program pays for the full cost of the rides.

Washington, DC Area

The GRH program for the Washington DC area is funded as part of the broader Commuter Connections program of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. Commuter Connections is funded through contributions from the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia and U.S. departments of transportation. The program receives no contributions from either employers or employees. It pays for the full cost of taxi rides (excluding tips) and 24-hour car rentals (excluding gasoline, taxes and insurance).

Federal Transit Administration Study

In 2006, the Federal Transit Administration published a study of 55 GRH programs around the country. The objectives of the study were to compare key design and operational characteristics of the programs and to evaluate their utilization rates and cost effectiveness. Concerning cost limits, the study found that:

> Most GRH programs do not place dollar limits on the cost of the trips, but those that do range from per-trip lows of $25 in Minneapolis, $30 in Oklahoma City, and $35 in Cleveland, to highs of $100 in Tampa, and $200 in San Francisco (capped at $700 per year).[17]

[17] William B. Menczer, *Guaranteed Ride Home Programs: A study of program characteristics, utilization, and cost* (Federal Transit Administration, May 19, 2006), p.6.

For those programs that do place limits on the cost of rides, excess costs are the responsibility of employers or employees. The report does not provide any information regarding the administrative costs or other burdens to the programs of collecting these excess costs. With regard to employee contributions specifically, the study found that:

> Some programs require commuters to make co-payments. These include San Diego ($3), Central Ohio Transit Authority (10% of the fare), Southwest Ohio Regional Transit (20% of the fare), Dallas ($10 for vanpool users), Fort Worth ($5), and Richmond [Virginia] ($5 after the third claim). Phoenix provides the first ride free; subsequent rides cost the user 50% of the total cost. Saint Louis requires a 20% co-payment on rides costing up to $40 and requires the user to pay 100% of the costs in excess of $40.[18]

The study further suggests that employee contributions could deter participation in GRH programs.

Funding Strategy of the Alameda County GRH Program

Since its inception ten years ago, the Alameda County GRH program has been funded entirely through grants from the BAAQMD–TFCA. The program receives no contributions from either employers or employees. The program pays for the cost of taxi rides and 24-hour car rentals. It does not cover tips (for taxi rides) or gasoline (for rental cars), both of which are the responsibility of the employer or employee.

The total budget for the Alameda County GRH program for each of the last two years—fiscal years 2006/07 and 2007/08—was $135,000. Possibly contrary to expectation, the cost of rides makes up a small fraction of total program spending. For fiscal year 2007/08, approximately $17,000 (12 percent) was budgeted for direct costs, including $11,000 (8 percent) for rides. The remainder, approximately $118,000 (88 percent), was set aside for labor costs: general program management and administration on the part of both the CMA and Nelson\Nygaard, marketing, website management and database management.

The TFCA is funded by a $4 surcharge on motor vehicles registered in the Bay Area. Its purpose is to provide grants to public agencies—such as cities, counties, congestion management agencies (CMAs) and transit operators—within the BAAQMD's jurisdiction to implement projects in the

[18] Ibid.

Bay Area that will decrease motor vehicle emissions, and thereby improve air quality, in a cost-effective manner. (Non-public entities are also eligible but only to implement certain types of clean-air vehicle projects.) Most recently, the Alameda County GRH program received grants from the TFCA in the amounts of $150,000 for fiscal year 2005/06 and $270,000 for fiscal years 2006/07 and 2007/08. Both of these grants were made through the TFCA's County Program Manager Fund.

The BAAQMD requires that all projects receiving TFCA funds achieve a cost-effectiveness of $90,000 or less in TFCA funding per ton of emissions reduced. In other words, to receive funding from the BAAQMD, projects must be able to reduce air emissions for less than $90,000 in TFCA funds per ton. By comparison, the cost-effectiveness of the most recent TFCA grant given to the Alameda County GRH program was $16,591 per ton. This means that the GRH program is able to reduce a ton of air emissions for only $16,591, which is 5-6 times less than the $90,000 limit considered acceptable by the BAAQMD. Said differently, the GRH program is 5-6 more cost-effective than a borderline project funded through the TFCA's County Program Manager Fund.

Also, the GRH program was the fourth most cost-effective of 42 projects submitted through the County Program Manager Fund from eight Bay Area counties that were evaluated by the BAAQMD in 2007. Projects were submitted under nine categories: trip reduction/ridesharing, bicycle, arterial management, shuttle/feeder bus service, clean-fuel buses, low-emission light-duty vehicles, transit information/telecommuting, smart growth and diesel repowers/retrofits. In general, projects in the trip reduction/ridesharing category, which includes GRH programs, display high TFCA cost-effectiveness. This helps explain why five of the six GRH programs in the Bay Area are funded entirely or in part through TFCA grants, as discussed in the previous section.

The above information suggests that the use of TFCA grants to fund the Alameda County GRH program is appropriate on a number of counts. In particular, the GRH program:

- Fits the TFCA's general purpose of providing grants to public agencies within the BAAQMD's jurisdiction to implement projects in the Bay Area that will decrease motor vehicle emissions, and thereby improve air quality.
- Is able to reduce air emissions in a highly cost-effective manner, falling well within the cost-effectiveness limits imposed by the BAAQMD for projects funded through the TFCA's County Program Manager Fund.
- Was found to be more cost-effective than almost 90 percent of County Program Manager Fund projects evaluated by the BAAQMD in 2007, ranking fourth out of 42 projects submitted from eight Bay Area counties and under nine project categories.
- Is one of five GRH programs in the Bay Area, out of six total, that receives funding from the TFCA.

Key Findings

Below are the key findings from our research into the funding strategies employed by various GRH programs. These findings are the basis of our recommendations concerning program funding, which are presented in the next chapter.

❶ All GRH programs in the Bay Area are funded through public sources and most are funded, at least in part, through TFCA grants. The San Mateo County program is the only Bay Area program that does not receive TFCA funding; instead, it relies primarily on the local half-cent sales tax for transportation and, to a much lesser extent, employer contributions.

❷ Of the Bay Area programs, only the San Francisco and San Mateo County programs receive employer contributions. In the San Mateo program, employers are required to pay 25 percent of the cost of any ride; in San Francisco's, employer co-payments begin after the $700 yearly per-employer allowance has been exceeded. Since the cost of providing rides is a small percentage of total costs under both programs, employer contributions add up to only a very small fraction of overall program funding. The San Francisco program reports an added administrative burden associated with tracking reimbursement limits and employer allowances.

❸ Some GRH programs outside the Bay Area are funded entirely through employer contributions. The Boston program, for example, is funded, along with a range of other commute alternative programs, solely through employers' membership dues to the sponsoring transportation management association. The King County program is entirely funded through fees assessed on employers, either for the GRH program only or for the broader FlexPass package of commute alternative services. The King County program is able to charge employers for the program in large part thanks to state legislation requiring employers to provide commute alternative programs.

❹ Of the programs we researched, the one in King County, Washington, employs the most distinct funding strategy. It functions essentially as an insurance pool, with "premiums" paid by employers to cover a large base of non-self-selected individuals.

❺ The use of TFCA grants to fund the Alameda County GRH program is appropriate on a number of counts: the program fits the TFCA's purpose of decreasing motor vehicle emissions, easily meets the TFCA's criterion for cost-effectiveness, is more cost-effective than most other projects funded through the County Program Manager Fund; is one of five GRH programs in the Bay Area (out of six total) that receive TFCA funding; and is the only GRH program that is

not part of a broader TDM program with added commute alternative offerings for employers and employees.

❻ Under the Alameda County GRH program, the cost of rides makes up a small percentage of total spending, as it does under other GRH programs. For fiscal year 2007/08, approximately $17,000 (12 percent) was budgeted for direct costs, including $11,000 (8 percent) for rides; the remainder, approximately $118,000 (88 percent), was set aside for general program management and administration, marketing and other labor costs. For this reason, requiring employers to contribute only toward the cost of rides would have a very small impact on overall program funding.

Chapter 5: Overall Program Recommendations

Introduction

As mentioned earlier, our charge under this project was to carry out an independent performance review of the Alameda County GRH program to ensure that it is being administered and operated as efficiently and effectively as possible and to explore alternative funding strategies. Based on the findings from our performance review, we offer the following four overall, tiered recommendations for the program. Each one is described in more detail below.

- **Recommendation ❶:** Continue to rely exclusively on TFCA grants to fund the GRH program
- **Recommendation ❷:** Explore merging the Alameda County GRH program with other GRH programs in the Bay Area.
- **Recommendation ❸:** Consider expanding the GRH program into a comprehensive TDM program.
- **Recommendation ❹:** Require employers to contribute toward the cost of the GRH program (recommended only if certain conditions are in place).

Recommendation ❶: Continue to rely exclusively on TFCA grants to fund the GRH program

As part of our program review, we found that the use of TFCA grants for the GRH program is entirely appropriate. As we explained earlier, the purpose of the TFCA is to provide grants to public agencies for projects that will decrease motor vehicle emissions in a cost-effective manner.

In its project evaluation, the BAAQMD found the cost-effectiveness of the TFCA grant given to the Alameda County GRH program in fiscal year 2007/08 to be very high. During its most recent evaluation, the BAAQMD found the GRH program to be 5-6 times more cost-effective than a borderline project funded through the TFCA's County Program Manager Fund. More specifically, the program was the fourth most cost-effective of 42 projects evaluated in 2007 by the BAAQMD that were submitted through the County Program Manager Fund from eight Bay Area counties and under nine project categories. This placed the GRH program just outside the top 10 percent of projects, ranked by cost-effectiveness. From that perspective, the GRH program may even be seen as a showcase project for the TFCA and for Alameda County. Moreover, the Alameda County program is not the only of its kind to receive TFCA funding. In fact, five of the six GRH programs in the Bay Area are funded entirely or in part through TFCA grants.

TFCA grants are funded through a surcharge on motor vehicles registered in the Bay Area; in this way, employees who drive to work and create the congestion that necessitates commute alternative programs, are already indirectly paying for the GRH program. Also, while the Alameda County GRH program benefits some employees who work, but do not live, in the county, the converse is also true: GRH programs in other Bay Area counties—most of which receive funding from the TFCA—benefit some employees who work in those counties but who live in Alameda County.

Lastly, while it would be ideal to not rely on a single source of funds, the TFCA is a highly secure and reliable source. TFCA grants have enabled the GRH program to operate without interruption for ten years and demonstrate continued support from the BAAQMD. The program ranks highly under the TFCA's scoring criteria and guidelines so it does not appear to be in danger of losing out to competing projects. It is unlikely that the BAAQMD will change TFCA funding criteria in a way that would make the GRH program ineligible for funding or less likely to be fully funded. It is even less likely that the TFCA will be terminated outright or that its funds will be sufficiently reduced to make even high-scoring projects eligible for funds.

Recommendation ❷: Explore merging the Alameda County GRH program with other GRH programs in the Bay Area

Of the nine GRH programs we examined, three serve employers in more than one county: the program for Solano/Napa (two counties), the CommuteSmart program (four counties in Southern California) and the Commuter Connections program (more than a dozen cities and counties in the Washington DC metropolitan area). We recommend that the CMA explore merging its program with one or more other GRH programs in the Bay Area in order to serve a multi-county area. This has the potential to reduce indirect costs, for program administration, marketing and overhead, across the merged programs by taking advantage of efficiencies of scale. The merger idea is supported by the fact that the Alameda County GRH program benefits some employees who

work but do not live in the county while the converse is also true: GRH programs in other Bay Area counties benefit some employees who work in those counties but who live in Alameda County.

Perhaps the most obvious merger candidate is the Contra Costa County program, because 20 percent of employees enrolled in the Alameda County program live in Contra Costa. The CMA also could invite the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, which is the congestion management agency for Santa Clara County, to co-sponsor a program. While the Altamont Commuter Express operates a GRH program for its passengers, including in Santa Clara County, there is currently no countywide program in Santa Clara. An additional benefit of a merger is that most other Bay Area counties already provide additional commute alternative programs along with their GRH program. A merger would, therefore, allow the CMA to expand the range of commute alternative programs offered to residents of Alameda County (this is the subject of recommendation #3, below).

Recommendation ❸: Consider expanding the GRH program into a comprehensive TDM program

With one exception, all the GRH programs we investigated are operated as part of broader TDM or commute alternative efforts. That exception is the CMA's program. We recommend that the CMA consider expanding its GRH program into a comprehensive TDM program. This would allow the CMA to broaden the range of commute alternative services it provides to residents of Alameda County while fulfilling the Travel-Demand Management Element of its 2007 Congestion Management Program. It would also work toward meeting the objectives of AB 32 and SB 375, state legislative mandates to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. Additional commute alternative services that the CMA could offer 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. The website of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's 511 Bay Area program has a section on the commute alternative benefits, incentives and other programs offered by all the counties in the Bay Area (http://rideshare.511.org/rideshare_rewards).

To fund these additional services, the CMA should investigate the county's sales tax for transportation, the TFCA and funding sources from other public agencies. Several of the commute alternative programs that we researched, both in and outside the Bay Area, rely on their local sales tax for transportation for funding. These include the programs for Contra Costa, San Francisco and San Mateo counties, the CommuteSmart program in Southern California and the Capital Metro program in Austin. We realize, however, that there might be programmatic restrictions in Measure B—the Alameda County measure that authorizes the county's half-cent sales tax for transportation—that would make such funds unavailable for commute alternative programs.

Recommendation ❹: Require employers to contribute toward the cost of the GRH program (recommended only if certain conditions are in place)

As mentioned under recommendation #1, we believe that the CMA should continue to rely exclusively on TFCA grants to fund the GRH program. However, should the CMA Board decide to pursue employer contributions, it has several options. One is to require employers to pay for all or a portion of ride costs (as the San Francisco or San Mateo programs do). However, this is not recommended, as it would have an almost imperceptible impact on overall program funding. That is because the cost of rides constitutes only 8 percent of total program costs.

Another option is to require employers to pay for their share of all or a portion of total program costs, including not only rides but also administration, marketing and other expenses. Requiring employers to pay for all GRH program costs implies an average per-employer cost of $871 annually.[19] However, such a fee would likely deter some employers from participating in the program. There is some reason to think that even a small fee would lead to employer attrition. The annual survey conducted in 2004 among employer representatives asked if the representative's company would continue to participate in the GRH program if it charged a "minimal annual fee for each employee." Just over half (51 percent) of respondents stated that their company would no longer participate in the program. Only 19 percent answered that their company would continue with the program, with the remaining 30 percent saying that they did not know. Employer attrition could result due to the additional financial burden or the additional administrative task of submitting payment annually or perhaps because employers are simply used to it being a free service to them. While the Boston and King County programs are able to pass on the full costs of their GRH programs to employers, 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.

We believe that it is essential for the GRH program to reduce barriers to participation in order to promote its ultimate goal of encouraging commute alternatives. 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, and that it does not offer other TDM services—we recommend that the CMA explore requiring employer contributions only if several conditions are in place. These conditions are:

[19] $135,000 divided by 155 employers currently registered in the program.

- 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;
- The existence of a comprehensive, or at least more robust, TDM program for Alameda County employers (see recommendation #3); and,
- A stronger incentive for employers to provide commute alternative benefits for their employees. This could be in the form of a return to higher gas prices; requirements imposed by the state, possibly as a result of AB 32 or SB 375, two relatively new state laws related to climate change and smart growth; or requirements imposed by municipalities, similar to San Francisco's new "Commuter Benefits Ordinance," which requires large and medium-size employers to offer commute benefits to their employees (see discussion of San Francisco's GRH program in Chapter 1).

Appendix A: Employee Survey

See the following pages for the hard-copy version of the survey distributed annually among employees registered in the Alameda County GRH program.

ALAMEDA COUNTY CMA
GUARANTEED RIDE HOME

Employee Survey

Thank you for participating in the Alameda County CMA Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Program.
Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. This annual evaluation is a necessary part of maintaining funding for the program.
YOUR HELP IS GREATLY APPRECIATED! Please return by March 21, 2008. *Mail or fax to (415) 284-1554.*
Or, complete this survey on-line at www.grh.accma.ca.gov/grh/survey.htm

Employer Name: _____ **Your Name (optional):** _____

1. Please rate the quality of customer service you have received:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
Clarity of information provided about how the program works (brochures, instructions, website, etc.).					
Prompt and knowledgeable assistance when calling the GRH Hotline.					

2. How long have you been participating in the Guaranteed Ride Home Program?

❑ Less than 6 months ❑ 1 to 2 years
❑ 6 months to 1 year ❑ More than 2 years

3. Before today, were you aware of the rental car requirement for persons living more than 20 miles from their workplace?

❑ Yes ❑ No

4. Have you ever used your issued GRH voucher?

❑ Yes ❑ No

5. If you marked "Yes" above, which mode did you use for your most recent guaranteed ride home?

❑ Taxicab ❑ Rental Car

6. What is the approximate one-way distance between your work and home? _____ miles

7. If you live more than 20 miles away from your workplace and have used a taxi for a guaranteed ride home, why didn't you use a rental car?

❑ Unaware of the requirement
❑ Enterprise Rent-A-Car was closed for the day
❑ Less inconvenient than taxi
❑ Uncomfortable driving
❑ Too ill to drive/unable to drive
❑ Not sure how I would receive/return rental car
❑ I live less than 20 miles from my workplace
❑ Other: _____

8. On a typical day…

About what time do you arrive at work?

❑ Before 6 AM ❑ 6-6:29 AM ❑ 6:30-6:59 AM
❑ 7-7:29 AM ❑ 7:30-7:59 AM ❑ 8-8:29 AM
❑ 8:30-8:59AM ❑ 9-9:29 AM ❑ 9:30-9:59 AM
❑ 10 AM or later

About what time do you leave work?

❑ Before 3 PM ❑ 3-3:29 PM ❑ 3:30-3:59 PM
❑ 4-4:29 PM ❑ 4:30-4:59 PM ❑ 5-5:29 PM
❑ 5:30-5:59 PM ❑ 6-6:29 PM ❑ 6:30-6:59 PM
❑ 7 PM or later

9. What is your PRIMARY transportation mode (the mode you spend the most time in during your commute) to work NOW? *(Fill in the number of days. Make sure total days add up to the total number of days you work per week)*

PRIMARY MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

____ Drive Alone	____ Vanpool
____ Bus	____ ACE/Amtrak
____ Ferry	____ Bicycle
____ BART	____ Walk
____ Carpool (driving or getting a ride with one or more other people in the car)	
____ TOTAL DAYS YOU WORK PER WEEK	

10. Do you drive alone in order to get to a bus stop, carpool, vanpool, ferry, BART or ACE station?

❑ Yes ❑ No

11. BEFORE joining the GRH Program, what was your PRIMARY transportation mode (the mode you spent the most time in during your commute) to work? *(Fill in the number of days. Make sure total days adds up to the total number of days you worked per week)*

PRIMARY MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

____ Drive Alone	____ Vanpool
____ Bus	____ ACE/Amtrak
____ Ferry	____ Bicycle
____ BART	____ Walk
____ Carpool (driving or getting a ride with one or more other people in the car)	
____ TOTAL DAYS YOU WORK PER WEEK	

12. If you DROVE ALONE BEFORE you joined the GRH program, how important was the Guaranteed Ride Home Program in your decision to BEGIN ridesharing[1], riding transit[2], bicycling or walking for your commute to work?

❑ Very important. (It was the main reason for my switch.)
❑ Important. (It was an important part of my decision.)
❑ Somewhat Important. (It had some influence.)
❑ Not Important. (I began using alternative modes for other reasons.)

13. If the Guaranteed Ride Home Program were not available, would you… *(check one)*

❑ Stop ridesharing[1], riding transit[2], bicycling, or walking, and go back to driving alone.
❑ Continue ridesharing[1], riding transit[2], bicycling, or walking, but less **frequently** than before.
❑ Continue ridesharing[1], riding transit[2], bicycling, or walking **at the same frequency** as before.

[1] *Ridesharing includes driving with two or more people in the car (including the driver), carpooling and vanpooling.*
[2] *Transit includes ferry, bus, train, BART, ACE Train, and shuttle.*

14. **Does having a guaranteed ride home available when you need it encourage you to rideshare, take transit, walk, or bike MORE OFTEN than you would otherwise?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

↓

How much more often? _____ days per week

15. **Comments:** _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix B: Employer Representative Survey

See the following pages for the hard-copy version of the survey distributed annually among representatives of the employers registered in the Alameda County GRH program.

ALAMEDA COUNTY CMA GUARANTEED RIDE HOME

Employer Representative Survey

Thank you for participating in the Alameda County CMA Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Program.
Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. This annual evaluation is a necessary part of maintaining funding for the program.
YOUR HELP IS GREATLY APPRECIATED! Please return by April 9, 2008. Mail or fax to (415) 284-1554.

Employer Name: _____ **Your Name (optional):** _____

1. **Please rate the quality of customer service you have received:**

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
Clarity of information provided about how the program works (brochures, instructions, website, etc.).					
Prompt and knowledgeable assistance when calling the GRH Hotline.					

2. **Before today, were you aware of the rental car requirement for persons living more than 20 miles from their workplace?**

   ❑ Yes ❑ No

3. **Because rental cars are less expensive than taxis for longer trips, the program is trying to increase rental car usage.**
   Why do you think participants do not use the rental car option more often?

   ❑ Unaware of the option
   ❑ Needed ride home after Enterprise Rent-A-Car business hours
   ❑ Less convenient than taxi
   ❑ Not sure how they would receive/return rental car
   ❑ Too ill/unable to drive
   ❑ Uncomfortable driving
   ❑ Live within 20 miles of their workplace
   ❑ Other: _____

4. **How long have you been the Guaranteed Ride Home employer representative for your company/organization?**

   ❑ Less than 6 months ❑ 1 to 2 years
   ❑ 6 months to 1 year ❑ More than 2 years

5. **Have you ever issued a GRH Instant Enrollment voucher?**

   ❑ Yes ❑ No

6. **Does your company/organization provide any transportation subsidies to employees (i.e. Commuter Checks, Wage Works) to encourage the use of transit, carpools, vanpools or walking/biking?**

   ❑ Yes ❑ No

7. **How would you describe the amount of work you spend administering the GRH program?**

   _____ Too much work
   _____ Manageable
   _____ I could do more

8. **Do you inform new employees about the program?**

   ❑ Yes ❑ No

9. **Do you feel that having the GRH program available encourages employees to use alternative modes of transportation more often for their work trip?**

   ❑ Yes ❑ No

10. **Do you use the GRH website to get information about the program?**

❑ Yes ❑ No

11. In what ways can we improve the GRH website (www.grh.accma.ca.gov)?

_____

_____

_____

12. Would you like a GRH representative to contact you for a brief (less than 5 minute) program refresher?

❑ Yes ❑ No

13. Would you like additional GRH materials?

❑ Yes ❑ No

14. If you would like additional materials, what would you like sent to you?

❑ Brochures
❑ Posters
❑ Flyer
❑ Text for a newsletter/email blast
❑ New instant enrollment voucher (only if misplaced original)
❑ Other (please specify)

_____

15. Additional Comments:

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C: Detailed Edits for Survey Questions

Below are our suggested edits to specific questions in the employee and employer representative surveys for the Alameda County GRH program. Words we suggest be deleted are shown in strikethrough (~~strikethrough~~) while words to be added are shown in underline (underline).

Employee Survey

Question #4

Reword as: "Please rate the quality of customer service you ~~have~~ received in 2008:"

Reword second criterion as: "~~Prompt and knowledgeable a~~Assistance when calling the GRH Hotline."

Alternatively, change second criterion to: "Response time and information received when calling the GRH hotline."

Before question #5 (on the same screen)

Include new question: "How did you find out about the GRH Program?"

Provide multiple answer choices, such as: Employer or on-site representative, co-worker, carpool/vanpool partner(s), commuter/employee benefits fair, media and "Other (please specify)."

Question #8

Reword as: "When you used your most recent voucher, did you use a taxi cab or a rental car for your guaranteed ride home?"

Alternatively, reword as: "~~When you used your voucher,~~For your most recent guaranteed ride home, did you use a taxi cab or a rental car ~~for your guaranteed ride home~~?"

Question #9

Reword as: "If you live more than 20 miles away from your workplace and have used a taxi for a guaranteed ride home, ~~why didn't you use~~describe why you chose a taxi instead of a rental car?"

Question #12

Currently: "At the present time, how many days per week do you travel to work by each mode listed below (enter a number from 0 to 5 next to each mode for a total of 5 days)? Please enter the primary mode you use per day. This question assumes you travel to work 5 days per week—if you travel more or fewer days, just enter '5' next to your usual mode."

Change to: "In a typical week, how many days per week do you travel to work by each commute mode listed below? For each day, consider the mode on which you spend most of your time. Enter a number next to each mode so that the numbers add up to the number of days you work in a typical week (this is typically five but it could be fewer or more days)."

Question #15

Currently: "Before joining the GRH program, how many days per week did you travel to work by each mode listed below (enter a number from 0 to 5 next to each mode for a total of 5 days)? (This question assumes you travel to work 5 days per week—if you travel more or fewer days, just enter '5' next to your most frequent mode of travel.)"

Change to: "Before joining the GRH program, how many days per week did you travel to work by each mode listed below in a typical week? For each day, consider the mode on which you spend most of your time. Enter a number next to each mode so that the numbers add up to the number of days you work in a typical week (this is typically five but it could be fewer or more days)."

Question #17

Reword as: "Stop ridesharing ~~(driving with one or more other people in the car, carpooling, or vanpooling)~~, riding transit ~~(ferry, bus, train, BART, ACE Train, or shuttle)~~, bicycling, or walking, and ~~go back to driving~~ drive alone."

Then, define "rideshare/ridesharing" and "transit" only once on the page, at the top, and indicate that the definitions apply to questions 17 and 18.

Question #18

Currently: "Does having a guaranteed ride home program available when you need it encourage you to rideshare (driving with one or more other people in the car, carpooling, or vanpooling), ride transit (ferry, bus, train, BART, ACE Train, or shuttle), bicycle, or walk MORE OFTEN than you would otherwise?"

Change to: "Do you agree with the following statement: 'The GRH program encourages employees registered in the program to rideshare, ride transit, bicycle, or walk MORE OFTEN than they would otherwise?'"

Change the answer choices from "Yes/No" to: "Agree strongly," "Agree somewhat" and "Do not agree."

After question #19 (on the same screen)

Include new question: "Compared to any other transportation benefits you receive from your employer how valuable is the GRH program to you? Examples of other transportation benefits include Commuter Checks, free/discounted transit passes, preferential parking for carpools/vanpools and bicycle parking."

Provide these answer choices: "More valuable than most," "As valuable as most," "Less valuable than most" and "N/A (GRH program is the only transportation benefit)."

Question #20

Reword as: "We welcome your comments and suggestions! Please ~~write down~~ provide any comments or suggestions you have concerning the GRH program below."

Employer Representative Survey

Question #3

Reword as: "Please rate the quality of customer service you ~~have~~ received in 2008:"

Reword second criterion as: "~~Prompt and knowledgeable a~~Assistance when calling the GRH Hotline."

Alternatively, change second criterion to: "Response time and information received when calling the GRH hotline."

Question #8

Reword as: "Does your company/organization provide any transportation subsidies or other benefits to employees ~~(i.e. Commuter Checks, Wageworks)~~ to encourage the use of transit, carpools, vanpools, or walking/biking?"

Change the answer choices from "Yes/No" to multiple answer choices, such as: Commuter Checks, Wageworks, free/discounted transit passes, workplace shuttle, free parking, preferential carpool/vanpool parking, bicycle parking, shower/changing room for cyclists and "Other (please specify)."

After question #8

Include first of three new questions: "How valuable do you think the GRH program is to your employees compared to any other transportation benefits your firm provides?"

Provide these answer choices: "More valuable," "as valuable" and "less valuable."

consider the GRH program "more valuable," "as valuable" or "less valuable" to their employees than any other transportation benefits provided by the employer.

Include second of three new questions: "How likely is it that your organization would continue to participate in the GRH program if you were required to pay for at least half of each employee's guaranteed ride home, up to $50 per ride?"

Provide these answer choices: "Very likely," "somewhat likely" and "not likely."

Include third of three new questions: "How likely is it that your organization would continue to participate in the GRH program if you were required to pay for your share of the *total cost* of the program? Total program cost includes administration and marketing and is much higher than simply the cost of rides provided. The fee would be $500-$1,500 per employer annually, depending on employer size."

Provide these answer choices: "Very likely," "somewhat likely" and "not likely."

Question #11

Reword as: "~~Do you feel that having~~In your opinion, how important is the GRH program ~~available encourages~~ in encouraging employees to commute to work using alternative modes of transportation more often?"

Change the answer choices from "Yes/No" to: "Very important," "Somewhat important" and "Not at all important."