

January 15, 2010

Ms. Debra Adams
State Rideshare Manager
Maryland Transit Administration
6 Saint Paul Street, 9th Floor
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Dear Ms. Adams:

Attached is a proposal to expand the Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home program that is operated by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments to the Baltimore metropolitan region. This proposal also includes St. Mary's County which is currently not part of the Washington Metropolitan Statistical Area.

Evaluation results have shown that GRH is a useful service and may have an influence on commute mode decisions, however, by itself, it is not a deciding factor for commuters to change modes. The program allows commuters to overcome a barrier to use various alternative modes and recent data shows that GRH also encourages alternative mode users to remain in their chosen arrangement longer periods of time.

The attached Scope of Work and budget includes two project areas within the program: General Operations and Maintenance and Processing Trip Requests and Providing Trips. The costs shown below are for a full fiscal year period.

As you know, there is also a GRH Marketing component, however, costs for this portion of the project are not shown in this Scope of Work. However, COG/TPB would be willing to share marketing materials and campaign themes from the Washington metropolitan region with the MTA. An additional task not shown is Evaluation. If the Baltimore region is interested in capturing transportation and emission impacts, the Evaluation task can be added at a later date. Preliminary estimates for transportation and emission impacts for the Baltimore Region based on the Washington DC metropolitan region's experience with the program, current worker population estimates in the Baltimore Region, along with current ridematching database registrants would be as follows:

Number of Daily Trips Reduced:	2,370
Daily VMT Reduced:	66,818
Daily Tons of NOx Reduced:	0.033
Daily Tons of VOC Reduced:	0.018

Please note that these impacts are estimated and will take about eight years to achieve in the Baltimore metropolitan region.

Once we have received an official commitment of the funding availability for the program to commence we can simply amend the Commuter Connections Work program to add the funding and program expansion language into the document.

Should you have further questions regarding the information provided, please feel free to contact me at nramfos@mwcoq.org or on (202)962-3313.

I look forward to working with the Baltimore region on this initiative.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Ramfos
Director, Alternative
Commute Programs

Cc: J. Cichy
K. Bounds
L. Erikson
R. Kirby



Baltimore Region Guaranteed Ride Home Program Proposal

A regional Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program implemented in the Baltimore region will help to eliminate a major barrier to using transit, carpooling, vanpooling, bicycling or walking to work. Studies have shown that a commuter's fear of being "stranded" at work if they or a family member become ill, or if they must work unexpected overtime, is one of the most compelling reasons commuters do not rideshare or use transit to travel to work. A regional GRH program eliminates this barrier by providing a free ride home in the event of an unexpected personal emergency or unscheduled overtime.

The Baltimore regional Guaranteed Ride Home program will be similar to the Washington metropolitan region's GRH program in offering a free ride home to commuters that carpool, vanpool, use transit, bicycle, or walk to work at least two days per work week. As a result of the GRH program, some single occupant vehicle drivers will switch to a ridesharing or transit commuting alternatives, and current ridesharing and transit users will increase the usage of these alternative commute modes. The program will be able to demonstrate both transportation and emission impacts that could be used as part of the Baltimore region's air quality conformity process. The GRH program is an insurance program for those commuters who do not drive alone to their worksite.

The Guaranteed Ride Home program is a regional program and consists of the project area outlined in Figure 1. The budget for the Guaranteed Ride Home program includes three project areas outlined below, and is \$150,000 for a full fiscal year period.

A. GENERAL OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Commuter Connections staff at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) will process all GRH applications received by mail, fax, and the Commuter Connections Web site. Using the GRH software system, COG registers qualifying applicants, produces GRH registration ID cards, and sends ID card and participation guidelines to new registrants. Commuters can obtain information about the GRH program and complete an application on the Commuter Connections Web site, www.commuterconnections.org. Commuters may also call COG's Commuter Connections 800 telephone number, 1-800-745-RIDE, to ask questions about the GRH program and/or request

information and an application. The 800 number is equipped with a menu so that callers can choose the menu item that best fits their needs. All GRH questions and requests for information and applications are taken by COG/TPB staff.

COG staff also mails GRH applications to GRH users who have used the GRH program without formally registering. GRH guidelines permit a commuter to use the GRH service one time as a “one-time exception” before they register. Also, COG staff mails transit vouchers to GRH users who used transit as part of their GRH trip. All vouchers and invoices from transportation service providers are processed by COG staff.

In the event the commuter has not supplied their e-mail address, COG/TPB staff mails a re-registration notice to commuters who could not be contacted by telephone. The notice contains an application which the commuter can complete and send to COG to re-register. The commuter can also call Commuter Connections or visit the Commuter Connections Web site to re-register.

COG/TPB staff will assist the Commuter Connections Subcommittee in reviewing the GRH participation guidelines for any recommended changes (Attachment A). These recommendations will be presented to the Commuter Connections Subcommittee for their final review and approval. In the past, recommendations have been made to modify and add participation guidelines to better convey the GRH trip authorization, GRH re-registration, and one-time exception rules and restrictions.

COG/TPB staff will respond to the general public and to GRH applicants for registrations and re-registrations to the program. Registered commuters will be notified when their GRH registration is about to expire. Staff will continue to prepare and send new and re-registration GRH ID cards, registration letters, and participation guidelines on a weekly basis. Staff will also continue to monitor and maintain the GRH applicant database and server. COG/TPB staff will continue to update and maintain program participation guidelines, and provide annual customer service training to the daily operations contractor and COG/TPB staff assigned to the project.

Cost Estimate:

Direct Costs (Telephone, Copies, etc): \$ 7,000
COG/TPB Staff Oversight: \$30,000

Total Cost: \$37,000

Products: Process requests from the general public for registration and re-registration to the program. Notify commuters when registration is about to expire.

Prepare and send GRH new and re-registration ID cards, registration letters and participation guidelines on a weekly basis.

Monitor and update GRH applicant database.

Update and maintain program participation guidelines.

Schedule: TBD

B. PROCESS TRIP REQUESTS AND PROVIDE TRIPS

GRH transportation service will be provided by several taxi companies, a rental car company, and a paratransit company, all under contract with COG. Commuters make their GRH trip request through a menu option provided on COG's Commuter Connections 800 telephone number. This menu option transfers calls for GRH trips directly to an operations contractor. This contractor reviews and assesses the trip request and approves or denies the request based on the GRH Participation Guidelines. The contractor then arranges the approved trips with the appropriate transportation contractor.

The operations contractor contacts, by telephone, GRH registrants without e-mail addresses whose registration is near expiration and re-registers the qualifying commuters. While the system of calling commuters has been successful, many messages left on commuters' voice mail are not returned. In such cases, re-registration is facilitated by COG staff as described in the previous section.

COG/TPB staff will continue management and monitoring of contract services for day-to-day operations services. Day to day operations include confirming ride request eligibility, dispatching rides through the ride service providers, tracking ride requests in the GRH database, processing invoices for payment for ride service providers, the daily operations contractor and for the general public for transit vouchers.

Customer service training will be provided to all Guaranteed Ride Home call center agents.

Cost Estimate:

Daily Operations Contractor:	\$40,000
Cab and Car Rental Rides:	\$60,000
COG/TPB Staff Oversight:	\$13,000

Total Project Cost: \$113,000

Products:

Process GRH trip requests, approve/deny requests, and arrange rides.

Call participants whose registration is due to expire to obtain re-registration information.

Management and monitoring of contract services for day-to-day operations, and ten service providers. This includes processing invoices for payment for contractors and for the general public for transit vouchers.

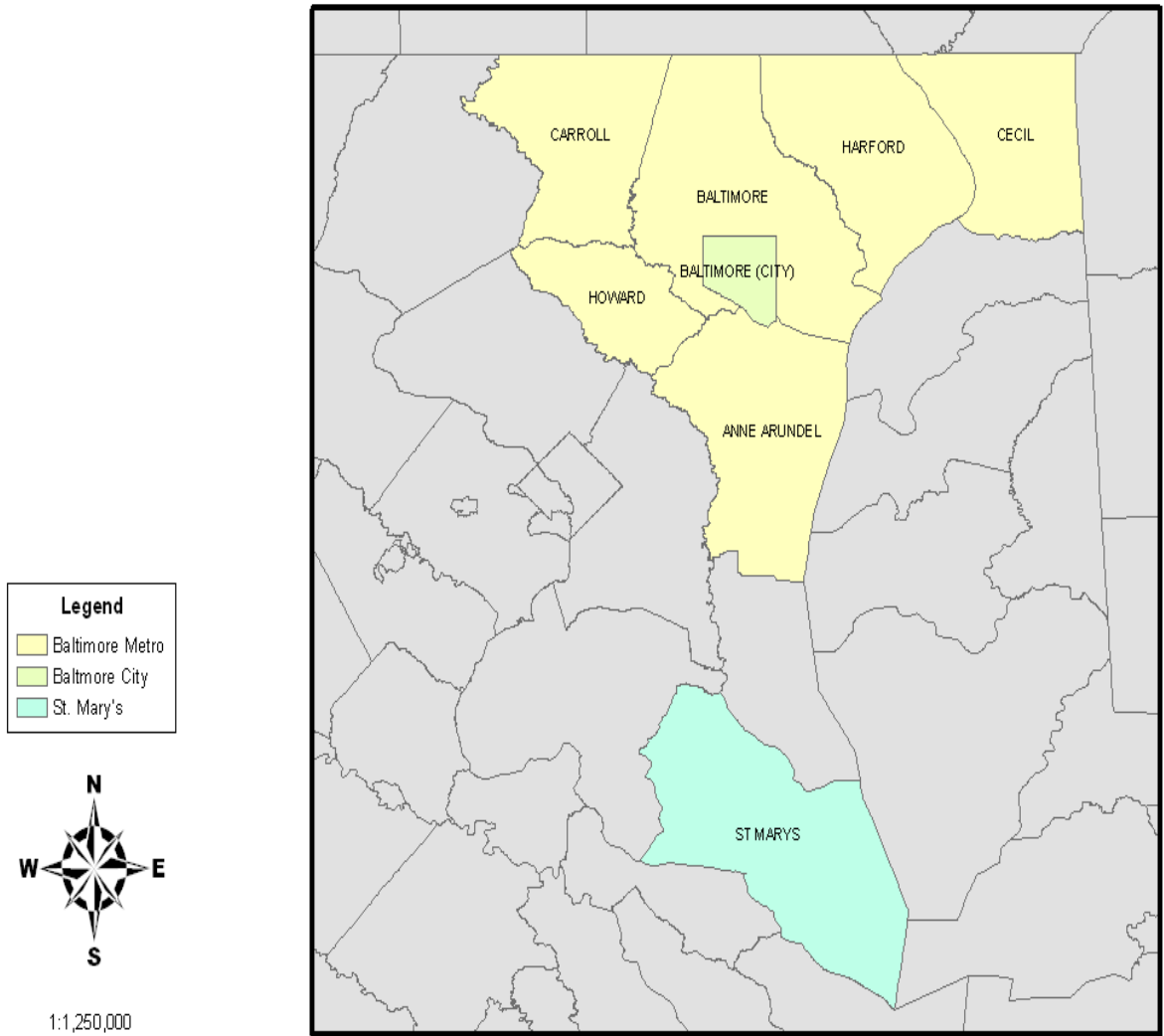
Annual customer service training for GRH call center agents.

Schedule:

TBD

FIGURE 1

Baltimore Metro GRH Region



ATTACHMENT A
BALTIMORE/WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA GUARANTEED RIDE
HOME PROGRAM PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

Guidelines are subject to change without notice. Call 1-800-745-7433 or visit www.commuterconnections.org for current Participation Guidelines.

1. Commuters must be officially registered with Commuter Connections before using the Guaranteed Ride Home service. Commuters must provide the supervisor name and phone number and at least two (2) phone numbers (home/cell and work) in order to register for GRH service. Registered commuters are those who have received an official registration letter and GRH ID card from Commuter Connections. Commuters who have not been officially registered may use the GRH service one time, providing they meet all other eligibility criteria. This is referred to as a “one-time exception.” Any commuter granted a one-time exception must officially register *before* additional GRH trips are granted. Registered and one-time exception commuters must be carpooling, vanpooling, taking transit, bicycling, or walking to their site of employment at least two (2) days per week **and** on the day they use the GRH service. GRH is only available to people commuting to and from work.

2. **Commuters must call Commuter Connections and receive authorization from Commuter Connections prior to using the GRH service.** Commuter Connections will issue an authorization number(s) to the commuter to approve a GRH trip. **Commuters will not be reimbursed for trips not authorized by Commuter Connections.** After approval, Commuter Connections will make the GRH trip arrangements for the commuter and, if necessary, provide instructions on how and where the GRH transportation provider will pick up the commuter. Commuter Connections is equipped to provide wheelchair accessible transportation as part of the GRH service as needed.

3. Registered commuters may use the GRH program up to four (4) times annually from their official registration date. Commuters who received a one-time exception then officially register with Commuter Connections may use the GRH service three (3) more times within 12 months from the date of their one-time exception GRH trip. The GRH trip credits are non-transferable.

4. Commuters must re-register annually to maintain their GRH registration. Commuters must contact Commuter Connections to re-register and update their registration information.
5. The GRH program may only be used in cases of unexpected personal or family emergency, unexpected illness, or unscheduled overtime. **Cases in which the GRH program cannot be used include, but are not limited to the following: previously scheduled medical appointments, trips to the hospital or emergency room for a commuter that needs medical attention, personal errands, transit service disruptions and/or delays, business related travel, working late without a supervisor's request, weather emergencies, any type of building closings or evacuations, and natural disasters.**
6. Requests to use the GRH program because of unscheduled overtime must be made **before** the commuter's registered work end time, **and** a supervisor's verification will be required at the time of the request.
7. GRH service is available between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except designated program holidays and any planned and/or unplanned Federal Government office closings. **GRH TRIPS MUST BE TAKEN BEFORE 10:00 P.M to ensure that the commuter has received their ride. Designated program Holidays include: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Birthday of Martin Luther King Jr., Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.**
8. To be eligible, a commuter must be physically working in the Washington, D.C. or Baltimore, MD Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as defined by the United States Office of Management and Budget. The MSA includes the District of Columbia, the Maryland counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Calvert, Cecil, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, St. Mary's, the City of Baltimore, the City of Alexandria and the Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William, and all cities within the aforementioned counties.
9. Eligible commuters can live anywhere inside the MSA or in any of the following areas: Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Harford, Howard, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, or Washington counties, the City of Baltimore, and any point along the Upper Eastern

Shore in Maryland; and Caroline, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Frederick, King George, Lancaster, Northumberland, Orange, Page, Rappahannock, Richmond, Shenandoah, Stafford, Spotsylvania, Warren, or Westmoreland counties, the City of Fredericksburg, or the City of Winchester in Virginia; and Berkley, Hampshire, or Jefferson County in West Virginia; and Adams, Franklin, or York counties in Pennsylvania. Any residence outside of the above-mentioned areas will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

10. All GRH trips must originate from the commuter's work location. Depending on the nature of the emergency, and home and work locations, a commuter using the GRH service may be required to use a taxi, car rental, transit, or any combination of these services to reach their destination point. **Commuter Connections will determine the type of service used and will issue a valid GRH authorization number at that time.**
11. Commuter Connections will pay for one vendor service and/or one transit service per request. If the GRH trip uses a taxi, Commuter Connections will pay for all charges, excluding gratuity, to the destination. **The commuter is responsible only for tipping the taxi driver.** Cancellation on the part of the commuter of a GRH trip may count as one of the four annual trips.

If a transit option is used for part of the GRH trip, the commuter will be mailed a transit reimbursement voucher. The transit reimbursement voucher must be submitted back to Commuter Connections within thirty days of transit use in order for payment to be made. Please allow 45 days for reimbursement. A commuter's supervisor must sign the transit voucher for any trip granted because of unscheduled overtime in order for the reimbursement to be issued.

If the GRH trip is made by rental car, the commuter is responsible for signing a standard rental agreement, showing a valid driver's license, proof of insurance, providing a credit card number for collateral, returning the rental car within a 24-hour period, and the following charges: gasoline refueling charges, taxes, purchase of insurance (if necessary), and additional rental charges if auto is not returned within a 24-hour period (unless Commuter Connections has given prior approval for additional rental time). The commuter will be responsible for any loss or damage to the rental car.

12. GRH is a free service provided by Commuter Connections at the

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG). COG will use its best efforts to provide the Guaranteed Ride Home in accordance with the guidelines shown above. By requesting assistance from the Guaranteed Ride Home program, the participant in the program explicitly acknowledges that COG assumes no liability for the timeliness of the GRH participating vendor(s) or any accidents that may occur on the conveyance.

01/15/10 - DRAFT