



Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey

Results for Fiscal Year 2008

Draft Report

May 19, 2009

We'll get you home. Guaranteed.

**National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments**



TITLE: Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey Results for Fiscal Year 2008.

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AGENCY: The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region, and plays an important role as the regional forum for transportation planning. The TPB prepares plans and programs that the federal government must approve in order for federal-aid transportation funds to flow to the Washington region. The TPB became associated with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) in 1966. COG was established in 1957 by local jurisdictions to address regional concerns including growth, housing, environment, public health and safety, and transportation. Although the TPB is an independent body, its staff is provided by COG's Department of Transportation Planning.

Commuter Connections is a regional network of transportation organizations coordinated by the TPB. Established in 1974, Commuter Connections offers free commuter services to help both businesses and their employees find the best available commuting options to improve traffic congestion and improve air quality through lower auto emissions. Primary services of Commuter Connections include ridematching for carpools and vanpools, administration of the Guaranteed Ride Home program, coordination of an employer outreach program including telework, and marketing of alternative commute options.

Funding for Commuter Connections is provided by:

District Department of Transportation
Maryland Department of Transportation
Virginia Department of Transportation
United States Department of Transportation

ABSTRACT:

This report presents the results of a survey of all Guaranteed Ride Home trip recipients during fiscal year 2008 (July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008). The survey was designed to gauge the level of satisfaction of commuters who utilized the GRH service.

The GRH program was started in 1997 to eliminate a key barrier to using alternative modes, commuter fear of being stranded without transportation in the event they need to get home due to an unexpected emergency or unscheduled overtime.

PUBLICATION:

The final adopted report will be published on the Commuter Connections website at www.commuterconnections.org under the Resources, Publications section.

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Background

Guaranteed Ride Home Program Description

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) through its Commuter Connections program, under the auspices of its funders, has operated the Guaranteed Ride Home program (GRH) since January 1997. A “commuter insurance” program, GRH is designed to encourage ridesharing and transit usage by providing a way home for qualifying commuters in the case of an unexpected personal/family emergency or unscheduled overtime when their normal alternative commute mode is not available. Many area workers who consider switching commute modes from Single Occupancy Vehicles to carpools, vanpools, and transit are concerned about being “stranded at work” if they unexpectedly have to leave before or after standard work hours. GRH eliminates this concern, and encourages ridesharing, taking transit, bicycling and walking to work. Commuters who use these transportation modes twice a week are provided with four free GRH rides home per year. Alternative mode commute practices reduce the number of automobiles on the road and help the region toward air quality goals.

The GRH program’s Participation Guidelines used during FY 2008 are provided in the Appendix of this report, and a full listing of the program’s current qualifications, limitations on its usage, and a more complete description of the process involved in registering commuters for the program may be obtained online at the Commuter Connections website, <http://www.commuterconnections.org>.

Customer Satisfaction Survey and Methodology

The customer satisfaction survey for GRH was conducted as an ongoing study for each month throughout the fiscal year. All commuters who obtained a free ride home through the program received a survey response card for each ride taken. The accompanying cover letter (*see* Figure 1) informed commuters of the purpose and voluntary nature of the survey, and the postage-paid 9 x 4” self-mailing response card (*see* Figure 2) allowed for quick and easy submission of responses on the part of survey respondents. In FY 2006 the questionnaire was modified to include two new questions; however none of the existing questions were altered, allowing for a direct comparison with all fiscal years. The survey card allows respondents to rate the GRH service and provide comments and suggestions with complete anonymity. However, despite the ability to remain anonymous, some respondents provided their name with their responses. In some instances with their consent, these respondents have been featured in local and regional newspaper articles and some of their comments have also been placed onto the Commuter Connections web site.



Dear Commuter:

Thank you for using the Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program in July. As a standard practice, we send out survey cards to all of our customers in order to determine their level of satisfaction with this free service. Your feedback will help us gauge the program's continued value and also help improve and better serve commuters in the Washington metropolitan area.

Please take just a moment to complete the enclosed survey card and simply drop it in the mail within 10 days, no postage necessary!

For the latest Guaranteed Ride Home participation guidelines, or if you would like information about other Commuter Connections services, please visit our web site at www.commuterconnections.org, or call us at 1-800-745-7433.

Thank you for using alternative means of transportation to get to work and for supporting the Guaranteed Ride Home program.

Happy Commuting!
COMMUTER CONNECTIONS

We'll get you home. Guaranteed.

Figure 1 | Sample Cover Letter Sent with Survey Card

Survey Design

The survey consisted of five multiple-choice questions, one fill in the blank and an area for comments. Four questions provided insight into customer opinions regarding the different operational functions of GRH and asked the respondent to rate the different aspects of the service by circling one of four responses—“Poor,” “Fair,” “Good,” or “Excellent.” Another multiple choice question asked the reason for the trip, and a fill in the blank question asked the respondent to indicate their wait time. The comments area provided an open ended forum to offer specific or general feedback, whether positive or negative. For some multiple choice questions, a few respondents did not indicate a rating, or added a qualifier to the response, such as “very,” a plus symbol (+), or a minus symbol (-). These types of qualifiers were ignored in tabulating the survey results.

The performance areas of GRH were addressed by four multiple-choice questions: reservations staff; transportation service; response time and overall service. “Reservations staff” refers to the operators who answered telephone calls from commuters requesting GRH service, verified the request in accordance with the official GRH participation guidelines, and arranged the ride for the commuter. These operators are employees of Diamond Transportation Services, Inc., which provided this service under a contractual arrangement with COG. “transportation service” refers to the modes of transportation (e.g. taxi, rental car service) and the affiliated organizations (e.g. xyz cab company, Enterprise Rent-a-car) who provided the trips from the workplace to the final destination. The types of transportation modes used for the GRH trips were selected by Diamond Transportation based on the severity of the emergency, distance traveled and customer preferences.

Figure 2 | Sample Survey Response Card



**Thank you for using Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH).
We'd like to know how you feel about our program.**

Please take a moment to complete this card and drop it in the mail. Your response is greatly appreciated.

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	
1. How would you rate the service you received from our GRH trip reservations staff?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6. What was the reason for your GRH trip? <input type="checkbox"/> Sick Child <input type="checkbox"/> Unscheduled Overtime <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Illness/ Family Emergency <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ 7. Comments: _____ _____ _____ _____
2. How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. How would you rate our response time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Approximately how many minutes did you wait until receiving your ride?	_____ minutes				

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 COMMUTER CONNECTIONS
A SMARTER WAY TO WORK
We'll get you home. Guaranteed.

Response Rates

Figure 3 | Number of Surveys Sent and Received Since Program Inception

Of the 2,994 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2008, 1,008 completed surveys were received. This was the highest quantity of surveys ever distributed and the second highest number of surveys returned since program inception.

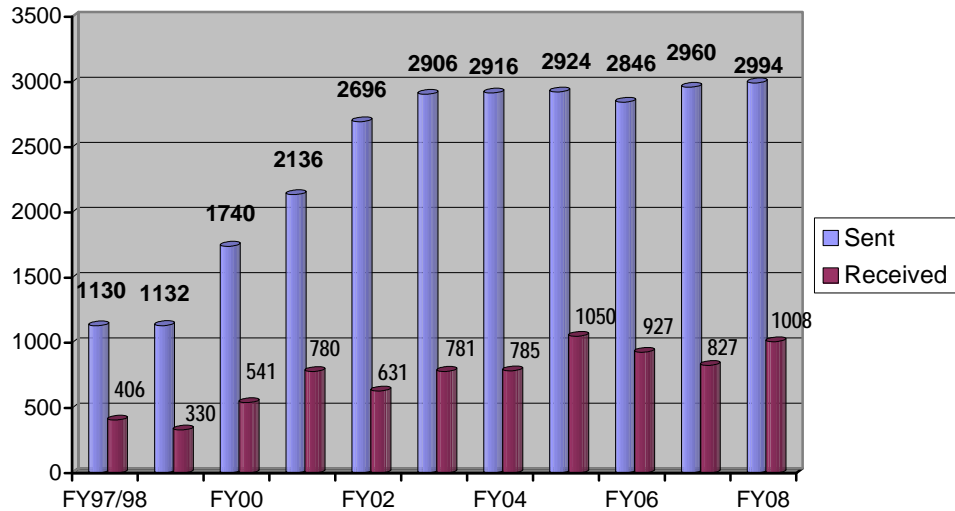
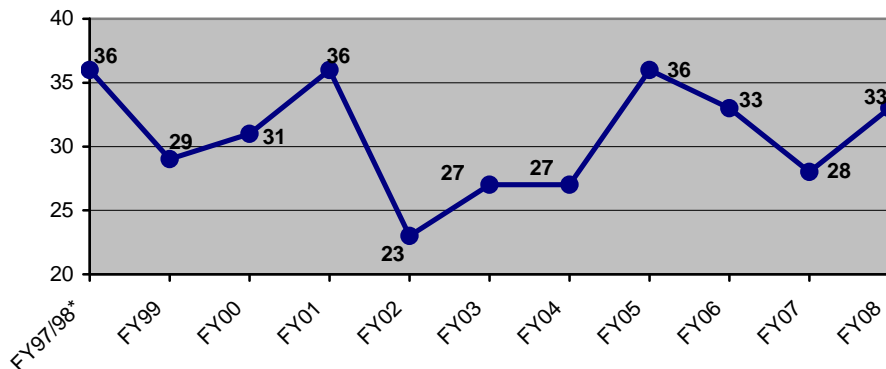


Figure 4 | Response Rates in Percentages Over All Fiscal Years.

Response rates typically fluctuate from year to year, but did remain steady at about 27% over a two year period between FY03 and FY04. Response in FY08 rebounded by five percentage points back to 33%, equaling the mark from FY06. The average response rate when combining all years is 30.5%. The large drop in response rate for fiscal year 2002 surveys was due to postal service disruptions following the Anthrax crisis, resulting in the temporary closing of the Brentwood Post Office facility in Washington DC.



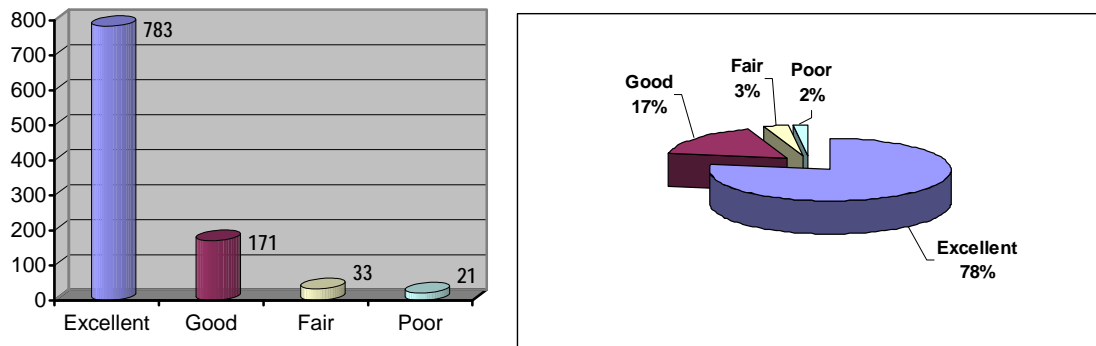
Fiscal Year 2008 Survey Results

This section indicates survey results received from 1,008 respondents for fiscal year 2008. Upcoming sections of this report will provide a comparison of results with previous fiscal years (1997 through present). See pages three and four under Survey Design for rationale behind each question, explanation of terms used, as well as an example of the survey response card that was used. Some respondents did not answer all four questions. As a result, response totals to some questions may not equal to the total number of survey respondents.

Reservation Staff

Figure 5 | Number and Percentage of Responses Received

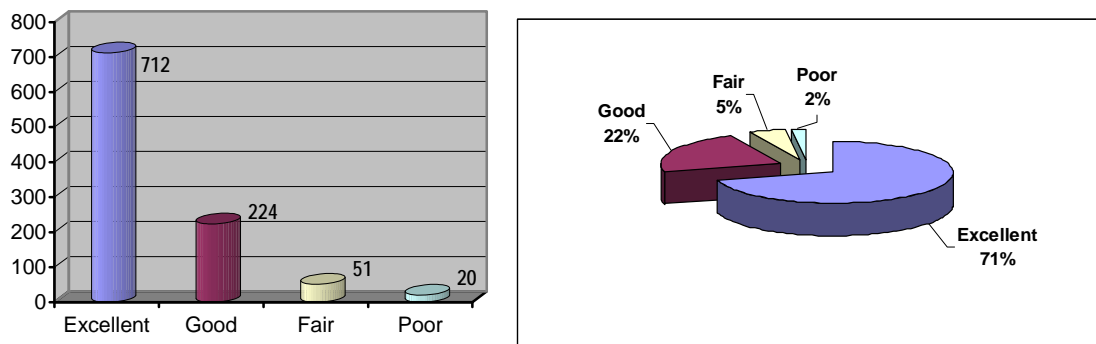
How would you rate the service you received from our GRH trip reservation staff?



Transportation Service

Figure 6 | Number and Percentage of Responses Received

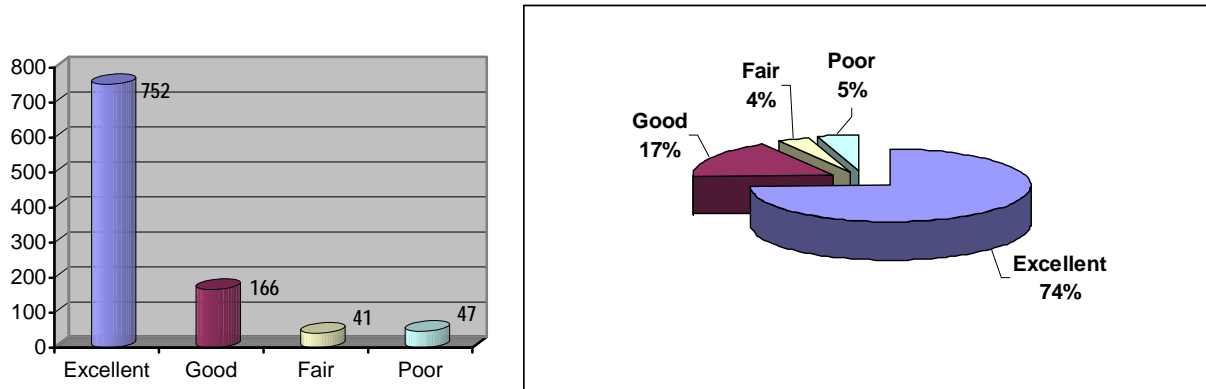
How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?



Response Time - Rating

Figure 7 | Number and Percentage of Responses Received

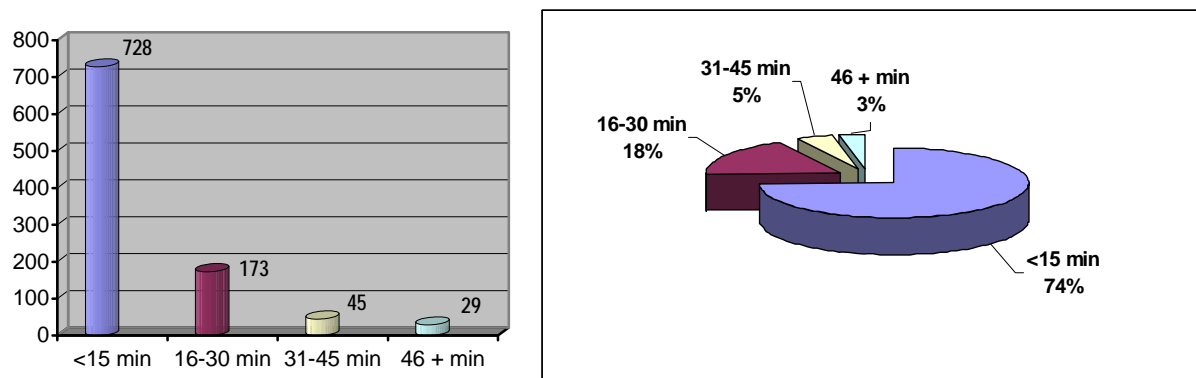
How would you rate our response time?



Response Time – Minutes

Figure 8 | Numbers and Percentages of Responses Received

Approximately how many minutes did you wait until your ride?

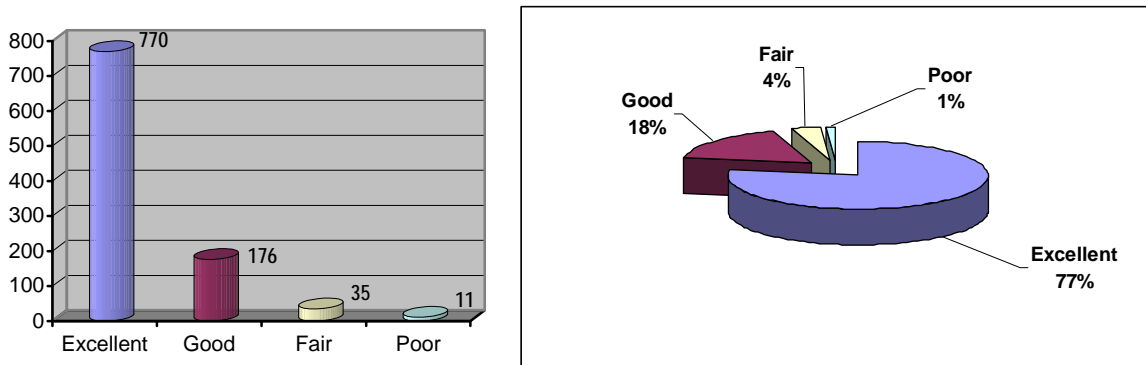


This was a newly added question for FY 2006. Average response wait in FY08 was 15 minutes and 92% stated wait time of 30 minutes or less. The average wait time is a two minute improvement over the previous year's time.

Overall Service

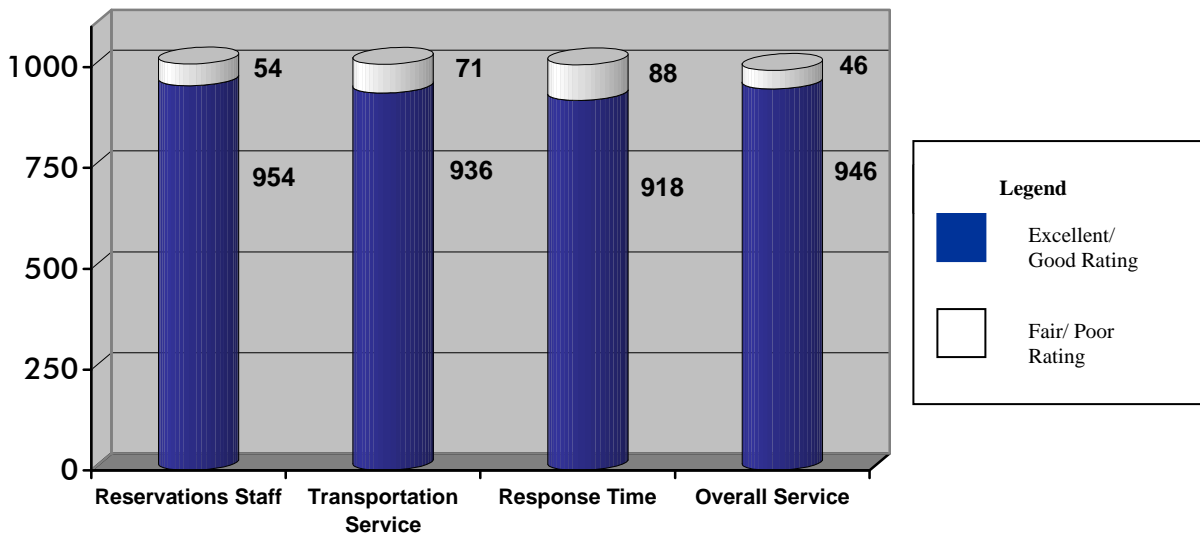
Figure 9 | Numbers and Percentages of Responses Received

Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?



Excellent/Good vs. Fair/Poor: All Questions

Figure 10 | Number of Responses Based on Combined Satisfaction Levels



This chart emphasizes the overwhelming positive ratings (excellent & good) compared to the negative ratings (fair & poor). For example, 946 of respondents gave the Overall Service category a positive rating, noted in the darker area, in contrast to merely 46 dissatisfied respondents shown on top of the bar in the lighter color.

Reason for Trip

Figure 11 | Numbers and Percentages of Responses Received

What was the reason for your GRH Trip?

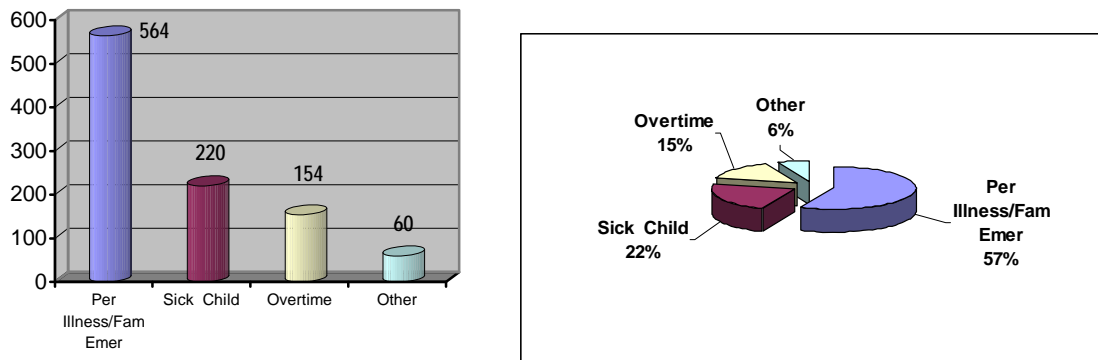
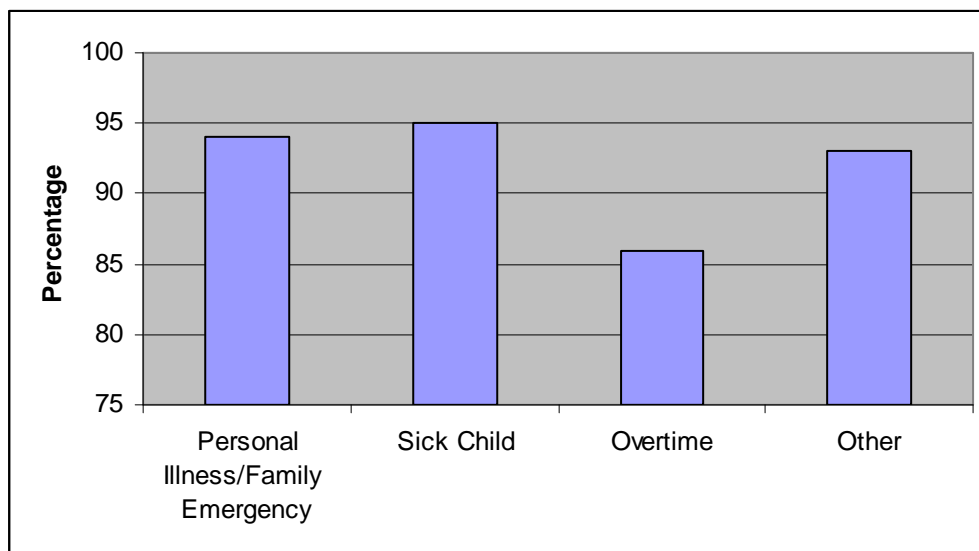


Figure 12 | Percentage of Positive Responses to Overall GRH Service by Reason for Trip

Excellent/Good Rating: Overall Satisfaction Category



This bar graph indicates that overall satisfaction with the GRH program remained high, regardless of the reason for taking a GRH trip. With an 86% rating, the least satisfied group were those who used the service for unscheduled overtime. The most satisfied were those who used the GRH service

to get home for a sick child.

Written Responses

In addition to the multiple-choice questions, survey respondents were provided a blank area to provide written comments. This open ended response area generated mostly compliments. Other written responses included suggestions, complaints, as well as a few miscellaneous comments as well. All feedback is valuable for assessing customer attitudes regarding specific service areas, and overall comments help to gauge the general pulse of the program. The total number of written responses remained significant as 366 out of a total 1,008 returned survey cards had written responses. The percentage of written responses decreased slightly compared to the previous fiscal year, from 38% of all survey cards in FY07 to 36% in FY08.

Many respondents provided feedback that fell into more than one category. For example, a respondent wrote "*The taxi was there immediately, but driver had to stop for gas. Otherwise fabulous!*" This response included both a complaint and compliment and was recorded in both categories.

Compliments

With 226 compliments, positive feedback was overwhelmingly the most common type of written response. Compliments were given by 62% of those who provided a written response, three times that of the rate of complaints. The majority of compliments were regarding overall satisfaction of the program. Many were expressions of gratitude for the GRH service. Some commuters explicitly listed GRH as the main reason which allowed them to utilize an alternative commute mode. Many of the respondents provided personal stories about how GRH helped them during a crisis situation. The breakdown of compliments by category are as follows: Taxi/Rental Service 16%; Overall Service 83%; Reservations Staff 14% and Response Time 15%. Note that some respondents compliment more than one area, therefore percentages add up to more than 100 percent. It should also be noted that the compliments received almost exclusively pertain to taxi trips, as only 1% of the trips used the rental car service.

- Samples of actual compliments from FY08:
- *Response time was great! Taxi service was great! Operator was very cordial and had a pleasant attitude!*
- *Very impressed with the response time and the professionalism of the GRH staff.*
- *Prompt response, professionalism and positive attitude are greatly appreciated.*
- *Your staff was excellent, responsive and efficient yet showed sympathy. Thank you!*
- *I left my Blackberry in the taxi and both the GRH staff and the driver bent over backwards to help me get it back.*
- *I am very impressed with all parties involved. Thank you.*
- *Great response with GRH representative and taxi service. Thanks so much for your assistance.*
- *Your CSR was absolutely fantastic. I wish I remembered her name!*
- *GRH staff was excellent and went out of the way to minimize my discomfort when I was sick.*
- *Thanks so much. Staff was very competent and helpful throughout my first instance using the program.*
- *Unbelievably fast response and great service.*
- *Overall, very pleased with the service. The representative that assisted me was very courteous and helpful.*
- *When I came out of our building in Crystal City, the taxi pulled to the curb. It couldn't be better timing.*
- *Kudos to your staff!*
- *They were faster getting to me than I was getting out of my office building. Excellent and courteous.*
- *I am very grateful for the GRH. This was my first time using it and I was very upset and nervous because my sister was dying. Taxi driver got to me as quickly as possible and tried to make me less stressed. Thank you!*
- *The service and response time was superb!*
- *I think this is a great service. The response time from the time I called was amazing. Very satisfied.*
- *This is a great service. I was very sick and I got timely help.*
- *The process worked out extremely well - the taxi was waiting by the time I made it downstairs.*
- *Thank you! My child got sick in the middle of the day and GRH allowed me to get home quickly.*

- *I was stunned by the quick response. The taxi was clean and courteous although he was not familiar with areas outside Arlington.*
- *First time user. Broke ankle at work and was able to make it to doctor appointment on time. Thanks!*
- *This is the best idea that has ever come around and it really helped get home to my child. Thank you - keep this program going.*
- *I use GRH about every eight months. The service is consistently outstanding and a life saver for the public transit commuter!*
- *This program is the only reason I carpool to work every day. Thank you!*
- *I really appreciate the guaranteed ride home and don't know what I would do without it...keep up the excellent work.*
- *I couldn't believe how great it was. You guys really saved me that day.*
- *Great program truly appreciated by commuters.*
- *I have been commuting from Fredericksburg for over two years now and this is first time using the service - I was extremely happy with everything.*
- *My congrats on running an excellent program.*
- *I can always rely on Commuter Connections. Many thanks for your great service!*
- *Invaluable service!*
- *Service was excellent and without it I would not be able to utilize carpooling to work. Thank you!*
- *Thanks for the service - keeps me commuting.*
- *This program allows us to commute comfortably knowing you are there in case of emergency!*
- *This service is the only reason I continue carpooling to work. Thank you!*
- *Excellent program which helps carpoolers get home when they need to.*
- *I was very impressed by the professionalism displayed by all parties involved.*
- *I am in a five-person carpool. Without GRH, it is unlikely that I would be able to participate in a carpool.*
- *GRH was a life saver. I am very grateful for your service.*

Complaints

A total of 74 complaints were received about experiences with the GRH service. Of respondents who lodged a complaint, many also gave a compliment. The break down of complaints by category are as follows: Taxi/Rental Service 49%; Overall Service 14%; Reservations Staff 64% and Response Time 27%. Note that some respondents complain about more than one area, therefore percentages add up to more than 100 percent. Complaints received under the Taxi/Rental Service category almost exclusively pertain to taxi trips, as only 1% of the trips used the rental car service. Another common type of complaint related to the need for the reservations staff to ask probing questions, which is done in order to verify whether the request fully meets the GRH trip approval requirements. Most commuters understand this as one of the necessary steps of the program, while some are defensive and put off by this process. Without these safeguards, it is possible that some commuters might abuse the program rules and take advantage of the free service. GRH can only be used for unexpected emergencies such as a personal illness, a sick child or other personal or family emergency situations. To keep costs down, the reservation staff may also encourage commuters to use a rental car instead of a significantly more expensive taxi fare. They may also ask the commuter to supplement the trip with Metrorail for part of the distance.

In some cases the approval of a GRH trip must rely on the perceived “unexpectedness” of the caller’s situation. This is to prevent misuse of the program for non-emergency situations. The reservations staff must at times differentiate between true emergencies and flagrant abuse. When making such judgments, a GRH trip may be rejected if the emergency is divulged as “expected”, such as a planned doctor’s appointment.

Complaints that were centered on the taxi service included some confusion about where to pick up the taxis as well as problems with identifying which taxi was part of the GRH program. Additional issues included the attitudes of some drivers, cab cleanliness, and the lack of knowledge the cab drivers had of the GRH program. Unfortunately, many of the taxi drivers do not possess common sense customer service skills and the companies do a poor job of communicating the GRH program protocol to their drivers. Although problems and issues are discussed between the GRH contractor and the taxi companies, the filtering down of information to the drivers can be less than ideal. Ultimately, the taxi companies are responsible for the training of taxi drivers and Commuter Connections has little direct control over this aspect of the service. Customers rarely note the specific cab company in question. Furthermore, since the surveys are anonymous, it is difficult to trace the poor service to a specific cab driver. Customers are however welcome to specify the cab company and/or driver by name when filling out the survey card and can also lodge a complaint directly to the taxi company. When known by Commuter Connections, this feedback is communicated to the appropriate cab company through the managing contractor.

- Sample of actual complaints from FY08:
- *The driver and the dispatcher were very courteous. I had to call several times because it took a long time for the taxi to arrive.*
- *First taxi never arrived - GRH rep called for second taxi and made sure it arrived. GRH rep was outstanding!*
- *GRH staff really tried hard to help me but taxi service never responded. I can no longer rely on GRH and will not recommend it.*
- *Waited a little longer than I expected, but otherwise a great service!*
- *Driver was lost and not polite. Overall great!*

- *I was very disappointed by the quality of service of GRH and the staff was not professional at all.*
- *Unfortunately, the taxi company wrote down my pick-up address as Constitution Ave instead of Connecticut. Had to call three times before it was caught.*
- *Coordination between driver and dispatch took too long.*
- *Still not clear on how to get a ride "authorized" if due to unscheduled overtime. Had a very difficult time getting the ride authorized by the agent.*
- *Reservation staff needs to be a little friendlier. The person I worked with sounded like I was imposing on her by calling in to use the service.*
- *Only problem was reaching your staff. The phone system was not working - it could not connect me to anyone.*
- *Taxi was dispatched to wrong side of Vienna Metro station.*
- *Taxi service (Barwood) was completely useless. Is there another service or do they have a monopoly?*
- *It took a long time for the taxi to arrive.*
- *The driver was very nice but he didn't know how to go from SW DC to Gaithersburg, so I directed him the entire way.*
- *Incapable taxi driver.*
- *Taxi driver was very sleepy. Asked him to pull over and I would drive - ride was scary.*
- *I got to the taxi stand 15 minutes after I called - the taxi company said I was a "no show" but they had not called. Another cab came 30 minutes later. Every other time I have used GRH it was perfect!*
- *Cab driver was scared I was going to rob him. He almost made me get out on the side of the road to leave me stranded.*

Comments and Suggestions

Generally comments were prone to be either a compliment or a complaint. Comments and/or suggestions however were received by 84 respondents, representing 23% of all written responses.

Sample of actual comments & suggestions from FY 2008:

- *You provide excellent service. Please increase the number of GRHs per year.*
- *Make sure the taxi driver knows the distance involved. I had to put gas in the taxi to get home.*
- *Would like to be able to have pick-up past 10pm.*
- *The GRH did not include a gratuity for the driver. Is it possible to include the gratuity, as the gratuity (\$10) exceeded my usual fare on transit? Thanks!*

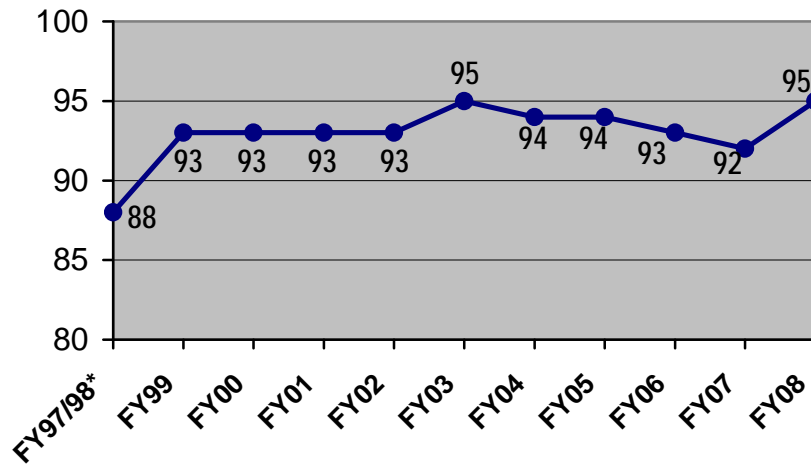
Comparison to Previous Fiscal Years

Reservations Staff

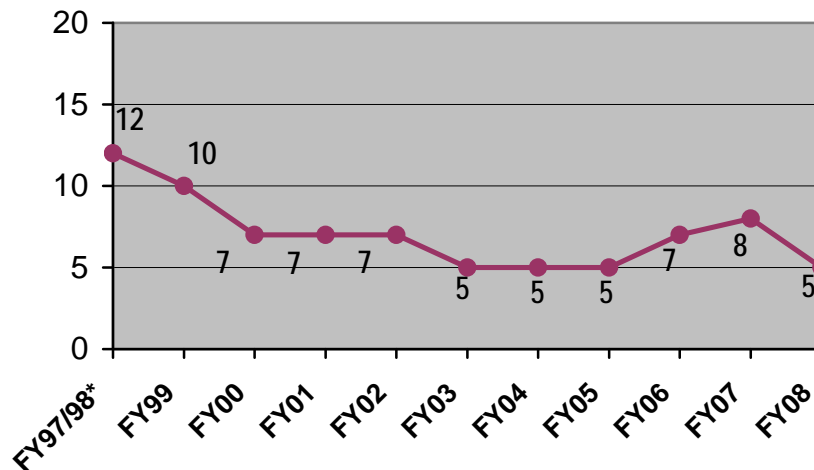
Figure 14 | Percentages of Responses Received for Question One Over All Fiscal Years

How would you rate the service you received from our GRH trip reservations staff?

Excellent and Good Combined Ratings



Poor and Fair Combined Ratings



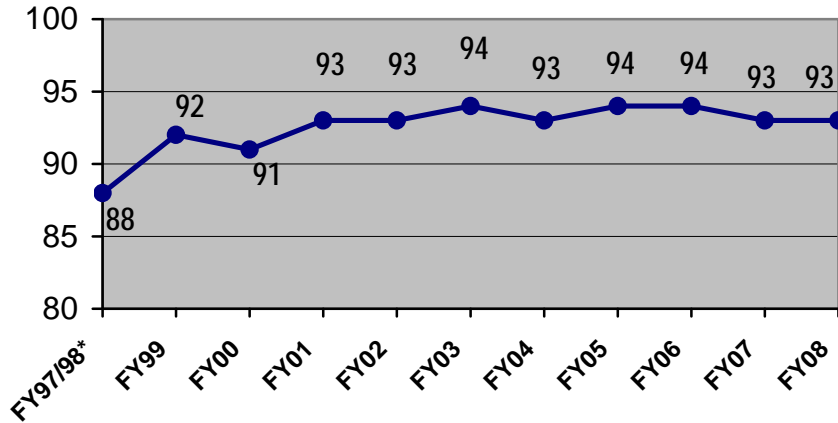
* FY97 was the first year the program began and data was only collected for a small portion of the time. FY97 data was combined together into FY98 to make it statistically significant.

Transportation Service

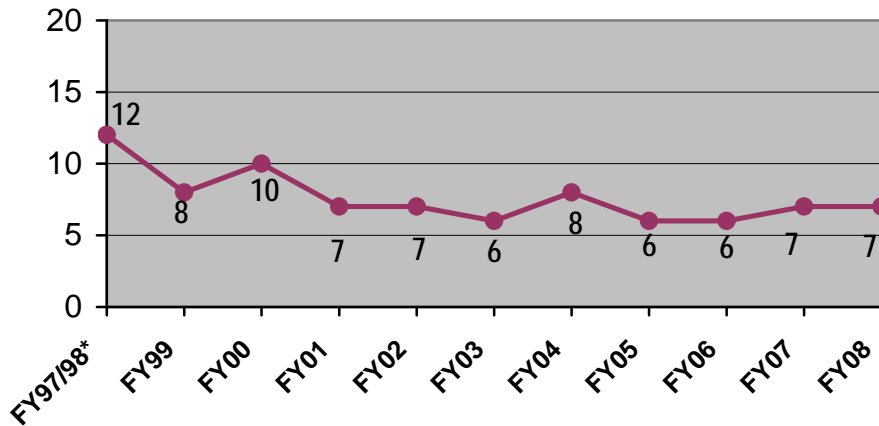
Figure 15 | Percentages of Responses Received for Question Two Over All Fiscal Years

How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?

Excellent and Good Combined Ratings



Poor and Fair Combined Ratings



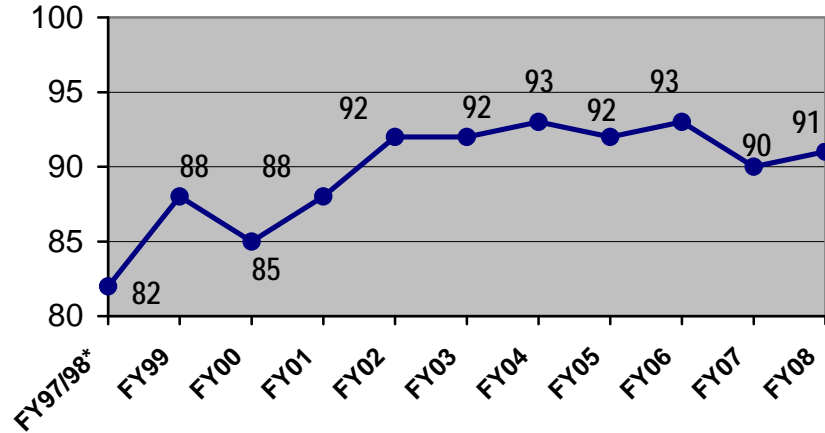
* FY97 was the first year the program began and data was only collected for a small portion of the time. FY97 data was combined together into FY98 to make it statistically significant.

Response Time

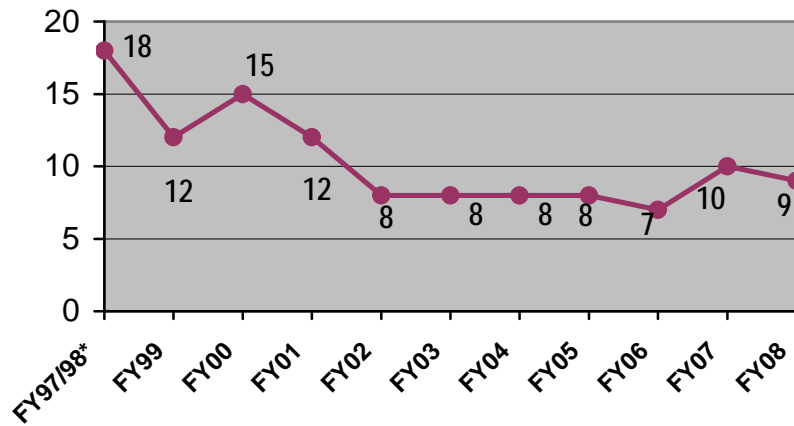
Figure 16 | Percentages of Responses Received for Question Three Over All Fiscal Years

How would you rate our response time?

Excellent and Good Combined Ratings



Poor and Fair Combined Ratings



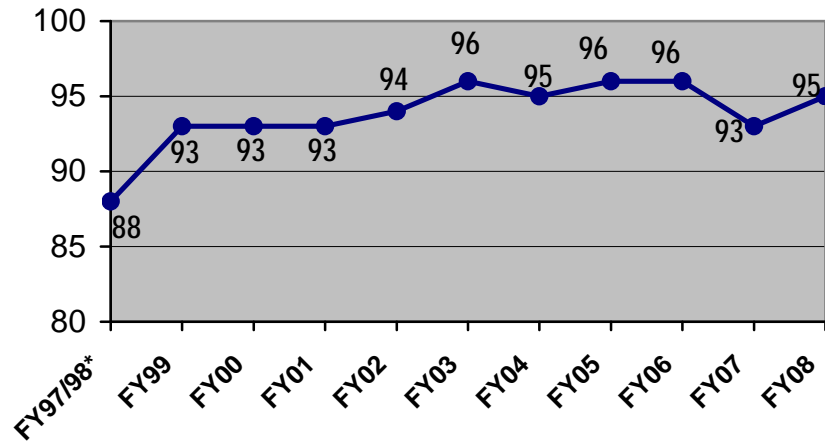
- FY97 was the first year the program began and data was only collected for a small portion of the time. FY97 data was combined together into FY98 to make it statistically significant.

Overall Service

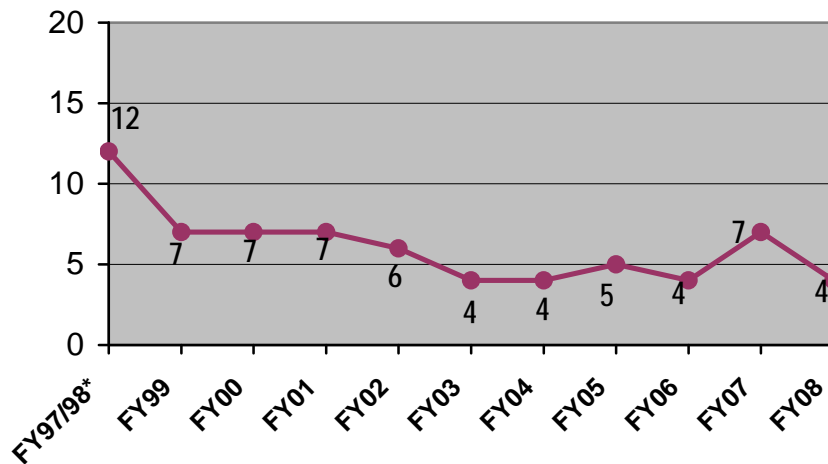
Figure 17 | Percentages of Responses Received for Question Four Over All Fiscal Years

Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?

Excellent and Good Combined Ratings



Poor and Fair Combined Ratings



* FY97 was the first year the program began and data was only collected for a small portion of the time. FY97 data was combined together into FY98 to make it statistically significant.

Recap Summary

Of the 2,994 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2008, 1,008 or 33% surveys were completed. The vast majority, 95% of the survey respondents were satisfied with the overall GRH service. Written responses were entered on over a third of the returned survey cards, the majority of which were compliments. Good or above ratings were given by at least 91% of the respondents for each category. Average response wait was 15 minutes and 92% waited 30 minutes or less.

For the aspects of the service within greater control of Commuter Connections, namely the service provided by the reservations staff, continuous customer training is provided and information is shared with contractor staff members so that improvements can be made.

Appendix

Response Data by Year, Question and Rating - Percentage of responses

Survey Questions	Responses	FY97/98	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03
How would you rate the service you received from our GRH trip reservations staff?	Excellent	62%	66%	70%	74%	76%	78%
	Good	26%	27%	23%	19%	17%	17%
	Fair	6%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%
	Poor	6%	5%	3%	3%	3%	2%
How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?	Excellent	59%	66%	65%	70%	69%	70%
	Good	29%	26%	26%	23%	24%	24%
	Fair	6%	5%	6%	4%	4%	4%
	Poor	6%	3%	4%	3%	3%	2%
How would you rate our response time?	Excellent	58%	60%	65%	70%	73%	74%
	Good	24%	28%	20%	18%	19%	18%
	Fair	9%	6%	10%	7%	3%	4%
	Poor	9%	6%	5%	5%	5%	4%
Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?	Excellent	61%	68%	69%	73%	78%	79%
	Good	27%	25%	24%	20%	16%	17%
	Fair	7%	5%	4%	5%	3%	3%
	Poor	5%	2%	3%	2%	3%	1%
Totals	Excellent	60%	65%	67%	72%	73%	75%
	Good	26%	27%	23%	20%	19%	19%
	Fair	7%	5%	6%	5%	4%	4%
	Poor	7%	4%	4%	3%	4%	2%

Survey Questions	Responses	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08
How would you rate the service you received from our GRH trip reservations staff?	Excellent	78%	78%	78%	76%	78%
	Good	16%	16%	15%	16%	17%
	Fair	3%	3%	4%	4%	3%
	Poor	2%	2%	3%	4%	2%
How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?	Excellent	70%	73%	76%	68%	71%
	Good	23%	21%	18%	25%	22%
	Fair	6%	4%	4%	5%	5%
	Poor	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%
How would you rate our response time?	Excellent	75%	75%	77%	74%	74%
	Good	18%	17%	16%	17%	17%
	Fair	5%	5%	4%	4%	4%
	Poor	3%	3%	3%	5%	5%
Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?	Excellent	78%	78%	78%	75%	77%
	Good	17%	18%	18%	18%	18%
	Fair	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%
	Poor	1%	1%	1%	3%	1%
Totals	Excellent	75%	76%	79%	73%	75%
	Good	19%	18%	17%	19%	19%
	Fair	4%	4%	2.5%	4.0%	4.0%
	Poor	2%	2%	1.5%	4.0%	2.5%

* FY97 was the first year the program began and data was only collected for a small portion of the time. FY97 data was combined together into FY98 to make it statistically significant.

**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 call Commuter Connections and receive authorization from Commuter Connections prior to using the Guaranteed Ride Home (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.
2. Commuters must be officially registered with Commuter Connections before using the GRH 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 be officially registered *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.
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. 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. 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 Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Montgomery and Prince George’s, the City of Alexandria and the Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William and Stafford, 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, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Harford, Howard, Kent, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Talbot, or Washington counties, and the City of Baltimore in Maryland; and Caroline, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Frederick, King George, Lancaster, Madison, Northumberland, Orange, Page, Rappahannock, Richmond, Shenandoah, Stafford, Spotsylvania, Warren, or Westmoreland counties, the City of Fredericksburg, or the City of Winchester in Virginia; and Berkeley, 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), 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.

1/15/08