



# **Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey**

Baltimore Metropolitan Region  
Fiscal Year 2016

**Draft Report**

**January 17, 2017**

**We'll get you home. Guaranteed.**

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



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**AGENCY:** Founded in 1957, The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is an independent, nonprofit association that brings area leaders together to address major regional issues affecting the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia. COG's membership is comprised of 300 elected officials from 23 local governments, the Maryland and Virginia state legislatures, and U.S. Congress. Policies are set through the COG Board of Directors, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, and the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee.

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization 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.

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 through fewer vehicles, 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 and 'Pool Rewards rideshare incentive programs, marketing of alternative commute options, and coordination of an employer outreach program, including telework.

Funding for the Baltimore GRH program is provided by:

Maryland Transit Administration  
Maryland Department of Transportation  
United States Department of Transportation

**ABSTRACT:** This report presents results of a survey of all Guaranteed Ride Home trip recipients working in the Baltimore Metropolitan region during fiscal year 2016 (July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016). The survey was designed to gauge the level of satisfaction of commuters who utilized the GRH service.

The GRH program eliminates a key barrier to using alternative modes; commuter fear of being stranded at the workplace due to illness, an unexpected personal or family emergency, or unscheduled overtime.

**PUBLICATION:** The final report once endorsed for release will be published on the Commuter Connections website at [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org) under the About Us, Publications section.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

BACKGROUND AND SURVEY METHODOLOGY..... 1

SURVEY DESIGN..... 2

FISCAL YEAR 2016 SURVEY RESULTS..... 3

WRITTEN RESPONSES..... 10

RECAP SUMMARY..... 14

APPENDIX ..... 15

## **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) in the Baltimore Metropolitan region since October 2011. 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 illness, 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 carpooling, vanpooling, 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 and survey samples used during FY 2016 are provided in the Appendix of this report.

### **Customer Satisfaction Survey and Methodology**

The Customer Satisfaction Survey for GRH was conducted as an ongoing study each month throughout the fiscal year. All customers who obtained a free ride home through the program during FY16 were provided the opportunity to participate in the survey. Emails with a link to the survey are sent on the day following the GRH trip. A small portion of GRH customers, five percent, have not provided Commuter Connections with an email address, therefore surveys for this group are sent through the U.S. Postal Service.

Both the hard copy and online surveys allow respondents to rate the GRH service and provide comments and suggestions. See appendix for samples of the survey response card and online survey. Note: some respondents did not answer all questions. As a result, response totals to some questions may not be equal to the total number of survey respondents.

## **Survey Design**

The FY 2016 survey consists of five multiple-choice questions, one fill in the blank and an area for comments. Four questions provide insight into customer opinions regarding various operational functions of GRH and ask respondents to rate aspects of the service by selecting one of four responses—“Poor,” “Fair,” “Good,” or “Excellent.” Another multiple choice question asks the reason for the trip, and a fill in the blank question asks respondents to indicate their wait time. The comments area provides an open ended forum to offer specific or general feedback, whether positive or negative.

The performance areas of GRH were addressed by four multiple-choice questions pertaining to: 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 contracted staff are employees of Diamond Transportation Services, Inc., which provides such services under 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) that provided the trips from the workplace to the final destination. The transportation modes used for the GRH trips are selected by Diamond Transportation Services based on the type and severity of the emergency, distance traveled, and customer preferences.

## Fiscal Year 2016 Survey Results Baltimore Region

### Response Rates

#### Number of Surveys Sent and Received

Of the 117 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2016, 17 completed surveys were received, a 14.5 percent return rate.

### Reservation Staff

#### Percentage of Responses Received

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

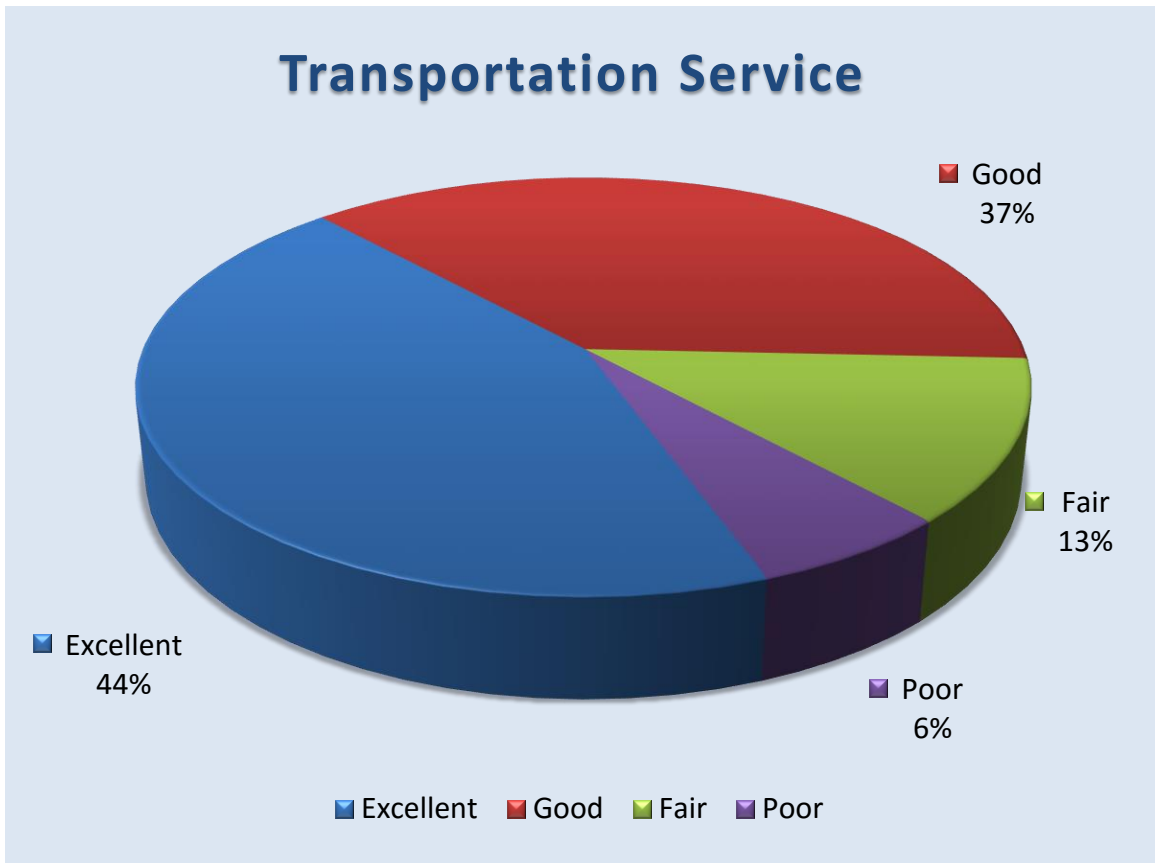


88% rated the trip reservations staff as either excellent or good.

## Transportation Service

### Percentage of Responses Received

How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?



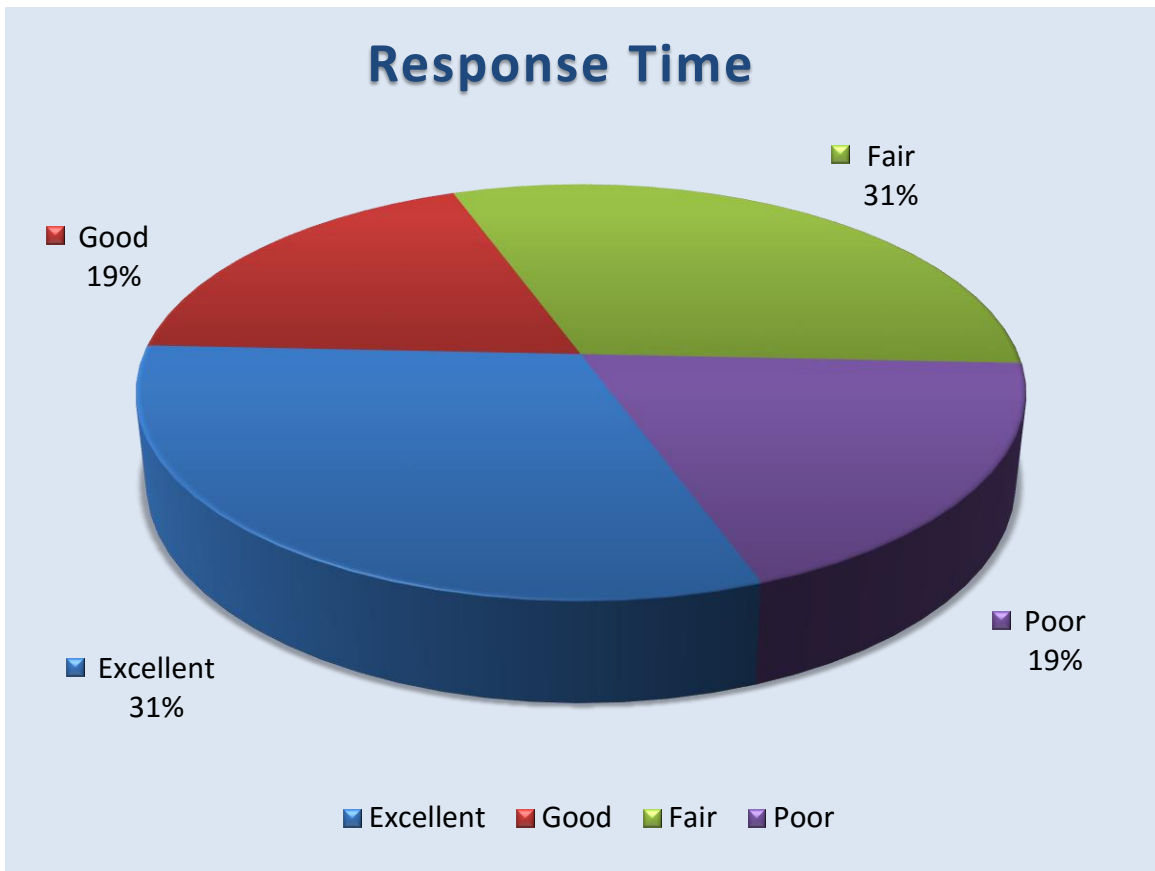
81% rated the transportation service as either excellent or good.



## Response Time - Rating

### Percentage of Responses Received

How would you rate the response time?



50% rated the response time as either excellent or good.

## Response Time – Minutes

### Percentages of Responses Received

Approximately how many minutes did you wait until your ride?

29% waited 15 minutes or less; 52% waited 30 minutes or less; and 48% waited more than 30 minutes.



Average wait time was 35.5 minutes.

## Overall Service

### Percentages of Responses Received

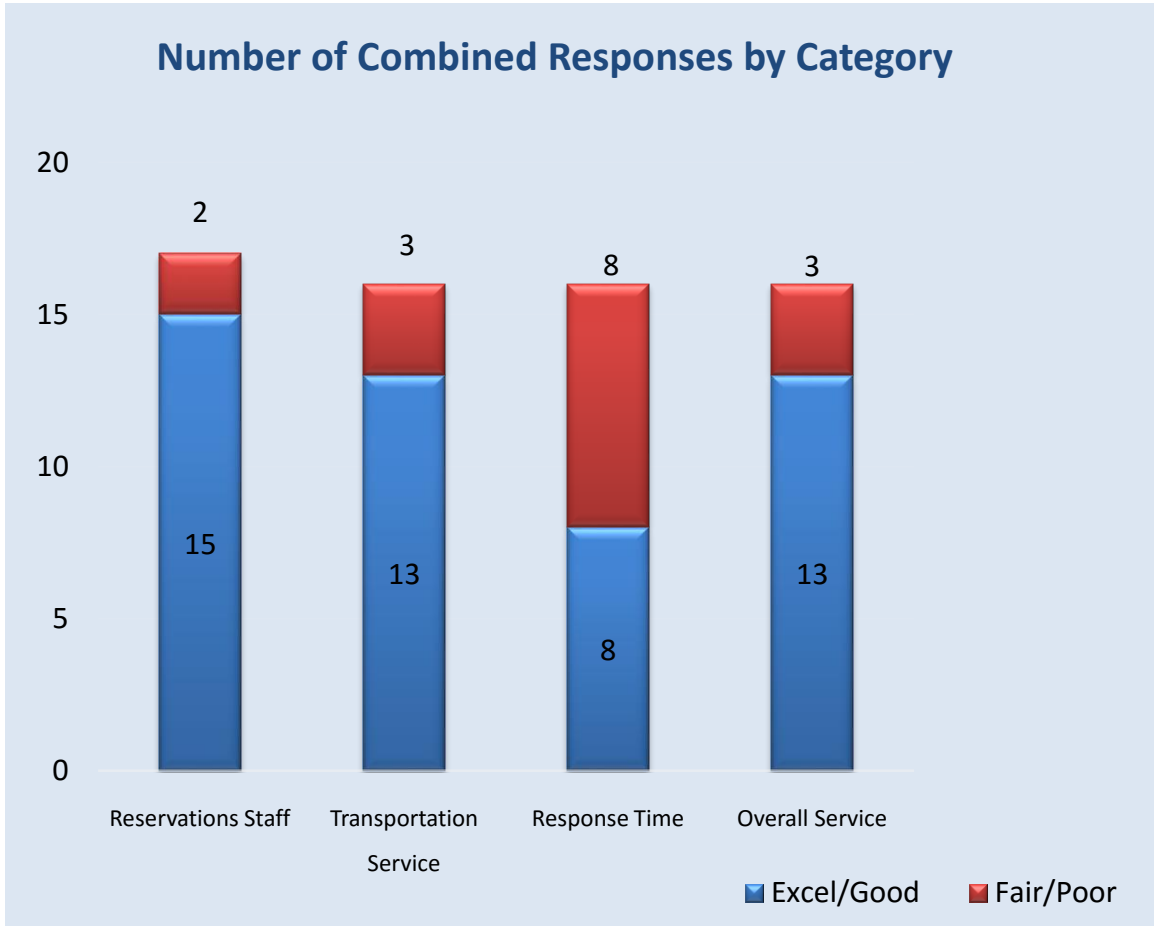
Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?



81% rated the overall service as either excellent or good.

## Excellent/Good vs. Fair/Poor: All Questions

### Number of Responses Based on Combined Satisfaction Levels

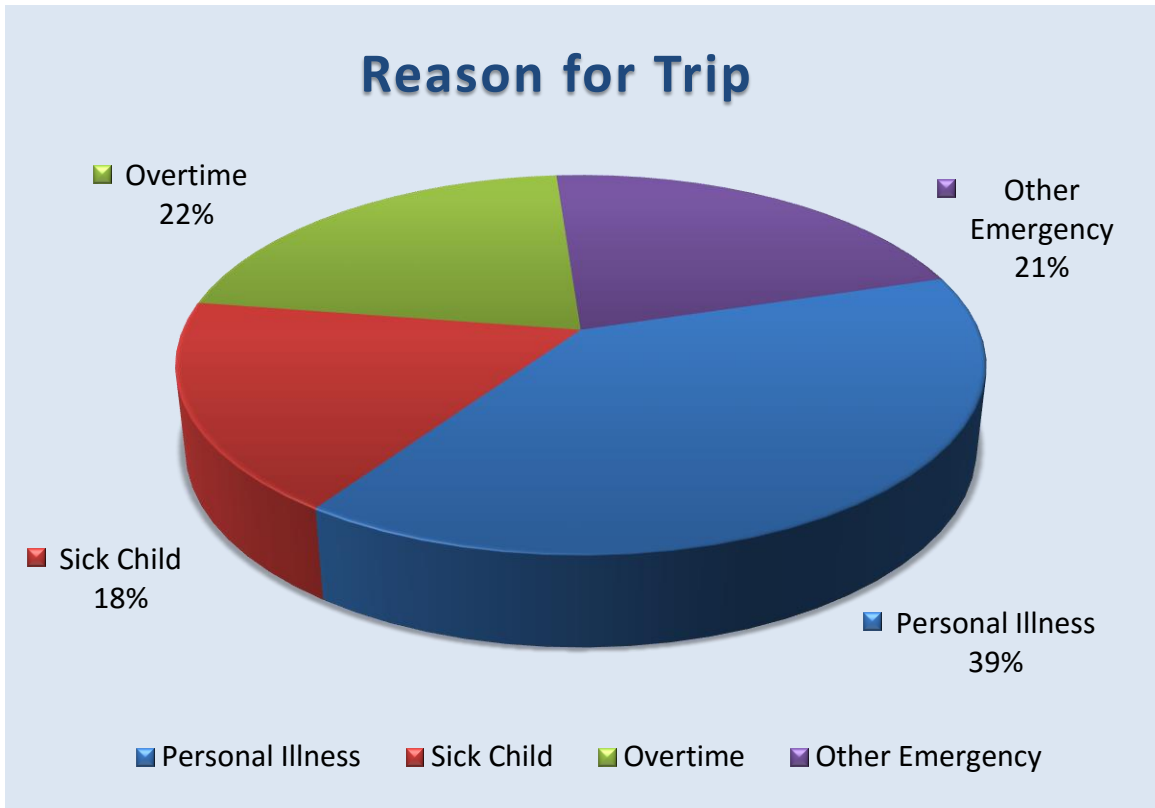


This chart emphasizes the overwhelming favorable ratings (excellent & good) compared to the less favorable ratings (fair & poor). For example, in the Reservation Staff column, 15 respondents gave the category a favorable rating of either Excellent or Good, noted in the blue area. In contrast, only 2 respondents, shown on top in red, rated the Reservation Staff with a less favorable “Fair or Poor” response.

## Reason for Trip

### Percentages of Responses Received

What was the reason for your GRH Trip?



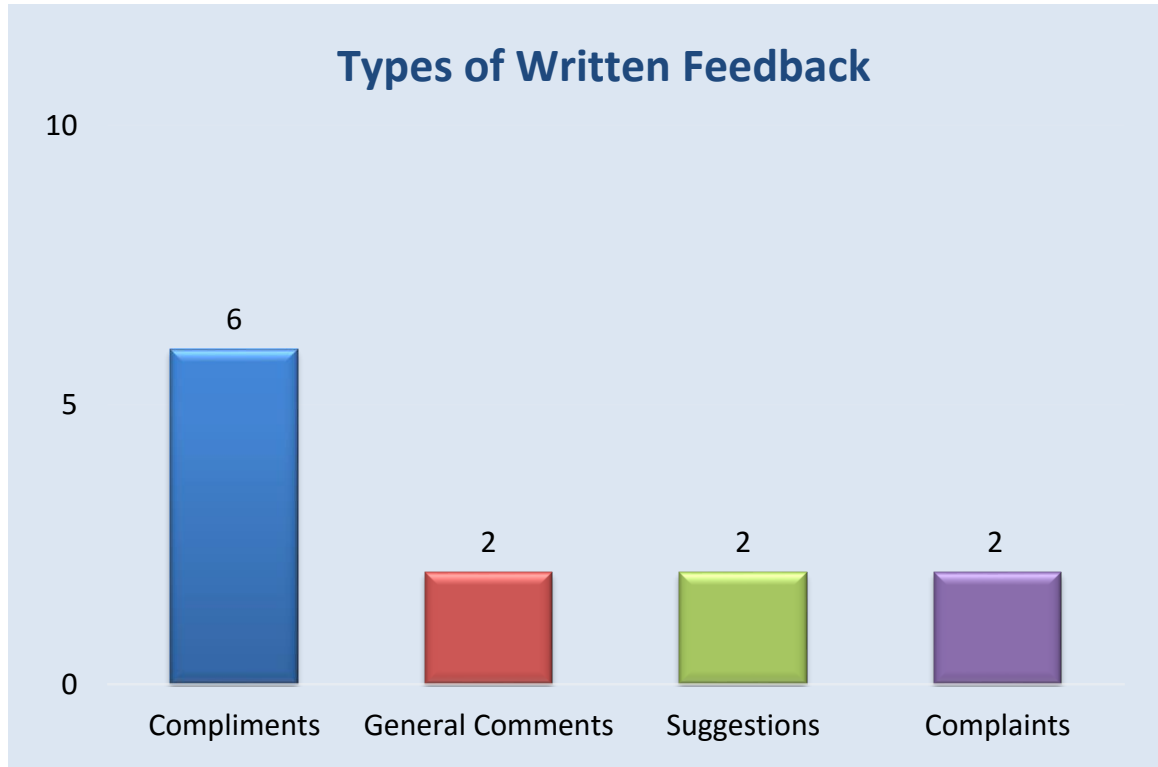
At 39%, personal illness was the most common reason given for using GRH.

## Written Responses

In addition to the multiple-choice questions, survey respondents were offered the option of providing written comments. All feedback is valuable for assessing customer attitudes regarding specific service areas, and helps to gauge the general pulse of the program. The total number of written responses equaled 11 out of 17 returned surveys, 65 percent of survey participants.

The open-ended written responses included compliments, suggestions, complaints, and comments. A few respondents checked more than one category, hence the combined bar chart numbers total more than 11.

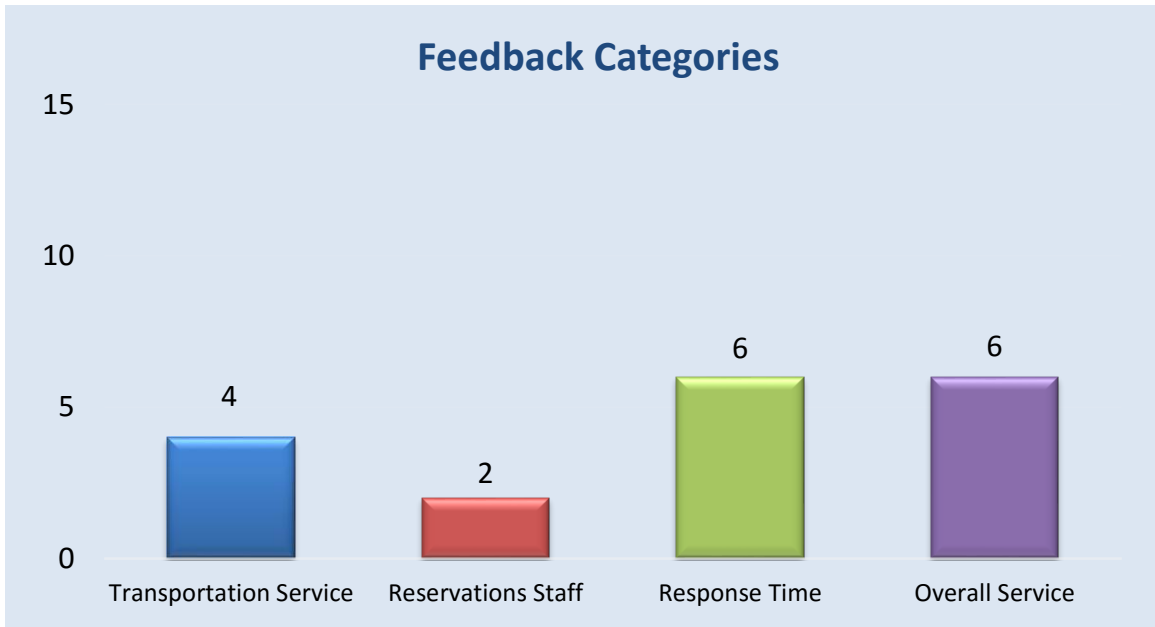
## Types of Feedback



The majority of feedback given were compliments.

## Written Feedback Categories

The vast majority of respondent feedback fell into more than one category, as respondents were allowed to check all that apply, hence the below chart adds up to more than the 11 who provides written feedback.



The Response Time and Overall Service categories were tied for receiving the most comments, followed closely by Transportation Service.

## Compliments

Of the 11 written comments 6, 55 percent contained compliments. Many were expressions of gratitude for the GRH service. Respondents provided personal stories about how GRH helped them during a crisis situation. Respondents frequently complimented more than one area of service; therefore the combined response numbers for each area will be more the total number of surveys with compliments.

The majority compliments were about Overall Service, followed by a tie for second between Transportation and Reservation Staff. Response Time had the least number of compliments. The breakdown of compliments by category are as follows: 4 of 6 compliments, 67 percent were made about the Overall Service; and 3, 50 percent were made about Response Time. Reservation Staff, and Transportation Service had just one written compliment each.

Compliments from FY16:

- The driver was very pleasant and polite. This is a wonderful service and offers a peace of mind when unexpected situations arise.
- Driver was very professional and courteous.
- Excellent!
- I am pleased that I was able to get home. You provide a valuable service, which I would recommend to other commuters.
- It was fantastic!!! I had to wait a bit longer for my cab than I expected. But still would highly recommend this service.
- Would rate it overall excellent.



## **Complaints**

Of the 11 written comments 2, 18 percent contained complaints. Response Time, Transportation and Overall Service were all referenced within each of the two written complaints.

Sample of actual complaints from FY16:

- I work at UMMS and there seems to be a lot of difficulty when needing to use a ride from this location. It is extremely long wait times and very disorganized between GRH and the taxi company representative here. The driver also did not take the correct exit from the highway causing a bigger delay for me to get to my son.
- I was waiting over an hour for a cab in Fells Point (there were cabs just sitting there that were not the one called for me). I was told 20 minutes for my wait. After over an hour of waiting I called a friend to come pick me up and they arrived before the cab.

## **Recap Summary**

Of the 117 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2016, 17 surveys were completed, 14.5 percent. At 39 percent, personal illness was the reason most stated for using the GRH service. The vast majority, 81 percent of survey respondents were pleased with the Overall GRH service. Written responses from 65% of survey participants. Compliments outweighed criticism 3 to 1. The average wait time was 35.5 minutes, and 52 percent waited 30 minutes or less.

# Appendix

## Sample Cover Letter Sent with Survey Card



Dear Commuter:

Thank you for using the Commuter Connections Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program in September. 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!**

Please note, your answers to the survey should only reflect your September 2008 GRH trip. If you have again used the GRH service after September 30, 2008, you will receive a separate survey card for that trip.

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](http://www.commuterconnections.org), or call us at 1-800-745-7433.

Thank you for using an alternative method of transportation to get to work and for supporting the Guaranteed Ride Home program. Your efforts help to reduce traffic congestion and improve the air we breathe.

Please be sure to tell your co-workers and neighbors to sign up for the free Guaranteed Ride Home program at [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org).

Happy Commuting!

**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS**

**We'll get you home. Guaranteed.**

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS, 777 NORTH CAPITOL STREET, N.E. SUITE 300 WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002-4239

THE COMMUTER INFORMATION SOURCE FOR MARYLAND, VIRGINIA AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

[www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org)



1-800-745-7433

**Sample Survey Response Card**



**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS®**  
A SMARTER WAY TO WORK



NO POSTAGE  
NECESSARY  
IF MAILED  
IN THE  
UNITED STATES

**BUSINESS REPLY MAIL**

First Class Mail Permit No. 10532 Washington, DC

Postage Will Be Paid By Addressee



**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS**  
METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
777 NORTH CAPITOL ST NE  
SUITE 300  
WASHINGTON DC 20077-0637





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**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?	
2. How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Sick Child <input type="checkbox"/> Overtime <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Illness <input type="checkbox"/> Other Emergency	
3. How would you rate our response time?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7. Your name: (optional)	
4. Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8. Comments: _____	
5. Approximately how many minutes did you wait until receiving your ride?	_____ minutes				_____	

1-800-745-RIDE • [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org)



**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS®**  
A SMARTER WAY TO WORK

**We'll get you home. Guaranteed.**

## Sample Online Survey

### Commuter Connections GRH Satisfaction Survey

We'd like to know how you feel about our program. Please take a moment to complete this survey. Your response is greatly appreciated.

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

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent

**How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?**

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent

**How would you rate our response time?**

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent

**Overall how would you rate our GRH service?**

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Excellent

**Approximately how many minutes did you wait until receiving your ride?**

**What was the reason for your GRH trip?**

- Sick Child
- Personal Illness
- Unscheduled Overtime
- Other Emergency

**Please Provide us with any comments about your GRH experience.**

**Do you consider your comments to be a: (check all that apply)**

- Compliment  

- Suggestion  

- Complaint  

- General Comment  


**Do your comments refer to: (check all that apply)**

- Taxi or Rental Car Service
- Overall Service
- Reservation Staff
- Response Time

## Survey Response Table

Survey Questions	Responses	FY14	FY15	FY16
GRH Trip Reservations Staff	Excellent	68%	52%	53%
	Good	20%	38%	35%
	Fair	9%	10%	12%
	Poor	3%	0%	0%
Taxi or Rental Car Service	Excellent	57%	41%	44%
	Good	21%	41%	37%
	Fair	12%	4%	13%
	Poor	10%	14%	6%
Response Time	Excellent	48%	34%	31%
	Good	27%	28%	19%
	Fair	12%	17%	31%
	Poor	13%	21%	19%
Overall GRH Service	Excellent	57%	45%	50%
	Good	28%	45%	31%
	Fair	10%	7%	6%
	Poor	5%	3%	13%

## 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](http://www.commuterconnections.org) for current Participation Guidelines.

1. Commuters must be officially registered with Commuter Connections before using the Guaranteed Ride Home service. However, 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 trips are granted. 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. 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 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 may contact Commuter Connections to re-register and update their registration information or request re-registration through the Commuter Connections website.
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 doctor, urgent care center, emergency room or hospital 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 office or building closings and/or evacuations, natural and/or man-made disasters. If any of the above unqualified cases should lead to a qualifying reason, the trip will be denied due to its underlying cause.**
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 following areas in the Washington, D.C. or Baltimore, MD regions. These areas include: the District of Columbia, the Maryland counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince George's, and St. Mary's; the City of Baltimore, and the Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William; and the City of Alexandria as well as all cities within the aforementioned counties.
9. Eligible commuters can live anywhere inside **the areas listed in Guideline #8** or in any of the following areas: Allegany, Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, Talbot or Washington counties 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 registered 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 form. The transit reimbursement voucher must be completed and 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.

01/19/16