



Guaranteed Ride Home Customer Satisfaction Survey

Results for Fiscal Year 2007

Final Draft Report

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 2007.

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AUTHORS: Douglas Franklin, TDM Marketing Specialist
Nicholas Ramfos, Director, Alternative Commute Programs

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 2007 (July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007). 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 2007 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 _____
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				
					7. Comments: _____ _____ _____

1-800-745-RIDE • www.commuterconnections.org **COMMUTER CONNECTIONS** **We'll get you home. Guaranteed.**

Response Rates

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

Of the 2,960 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2007, 827 completed surveys were received. This was the highest quantity of surveys ever distributed and the third highest number of survey returned since program inception.

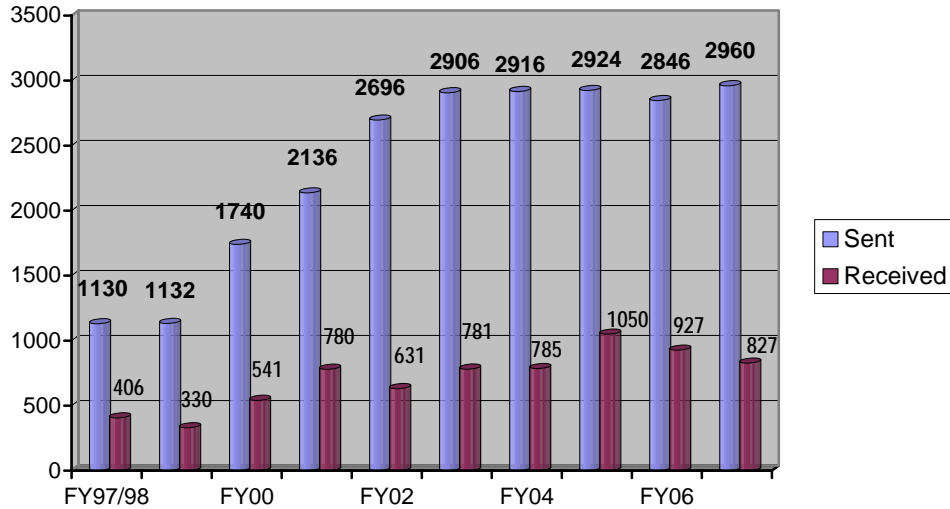
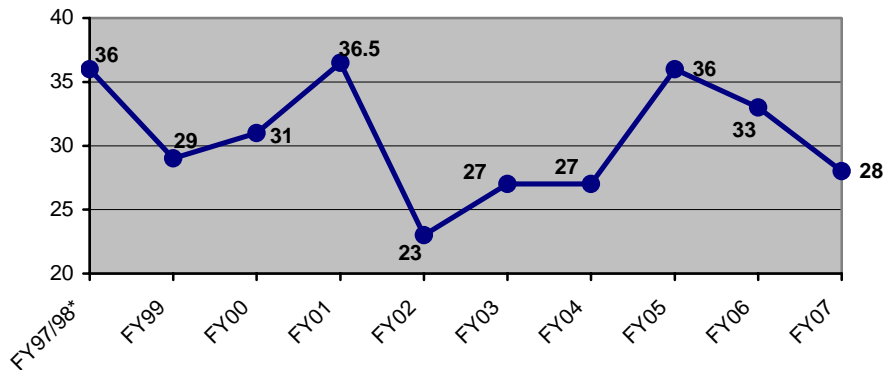


Figure 4 | Response Rates in Percentages Over All Fiscal Years.

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 FY07 decreased five percentage points to 28% from the previous year. The average response rate when comparing 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.



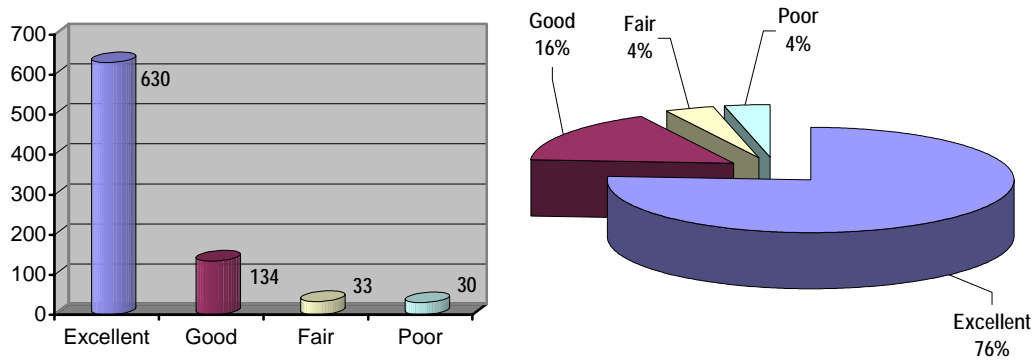
Fiscal Year 2007 Survey Results

This section indicates survey results received from 827 respondents for fiscal year 2007. Upcoming sections of this report will provide a comparison of results with previous fiscal years (1997 through present). For further clarification of the “Survey Design,” see pages three and four 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

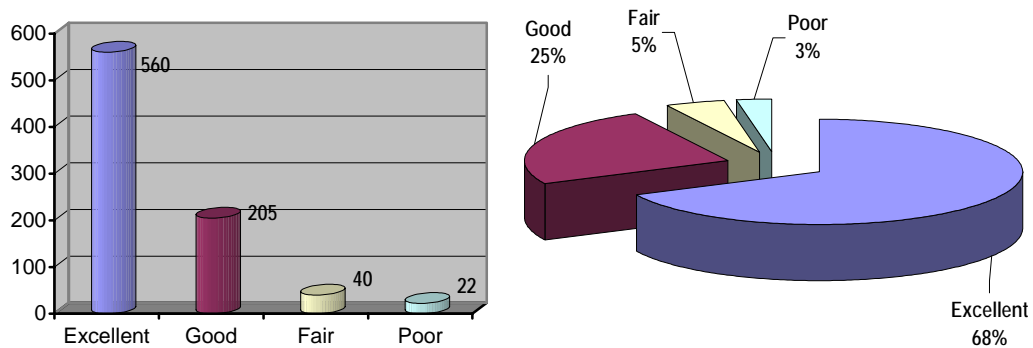
How would you rate the service you received from our GRH trip reservation staff?



Transportation Service

Figure 6 | Number and Percentage of Responses Received

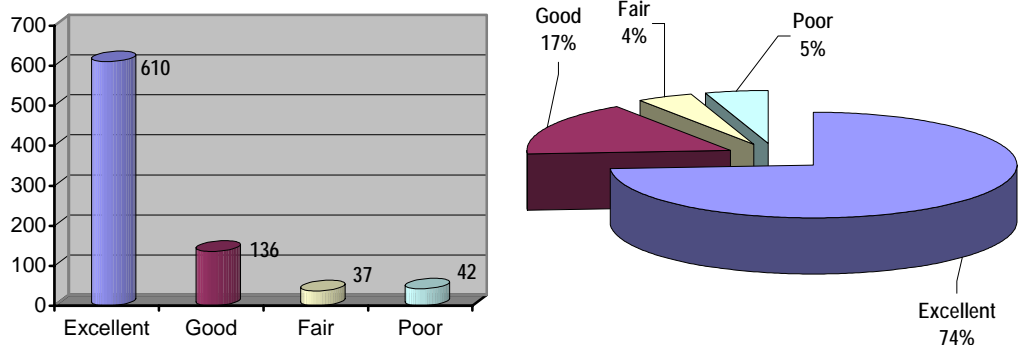
How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?



Response Time - Rating

Figure 7 | Number and Percentage of Responses Received

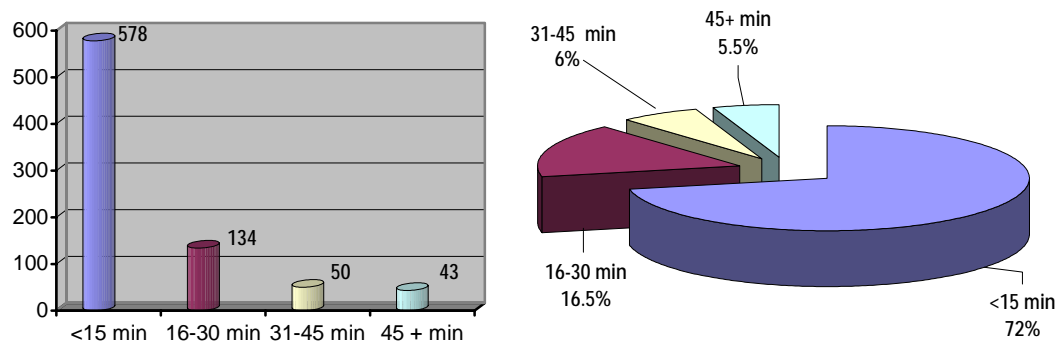
How would you rate our response time?



Response Time – Minutes

Figure 8 | Numbers and Percentages of Responses Received

Approximately how many minutes did you wait until your ride?

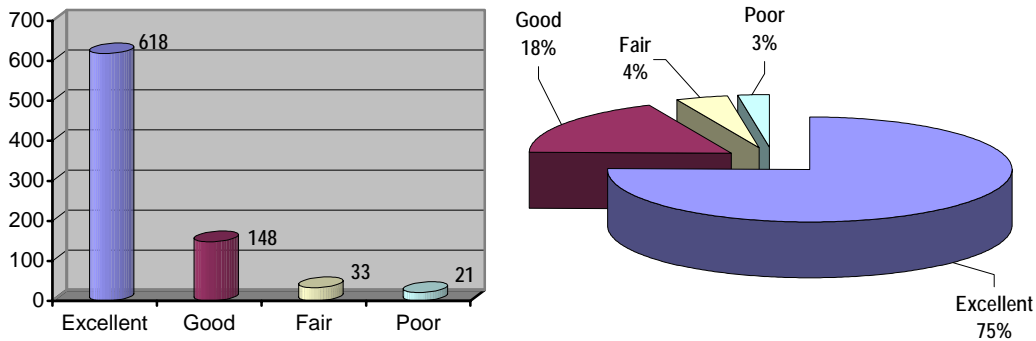


This was a newly added question for FY 2006. Average response wait was 17 minutes and 88.5% stated wait time of 30 minutes or less.

Overall Service

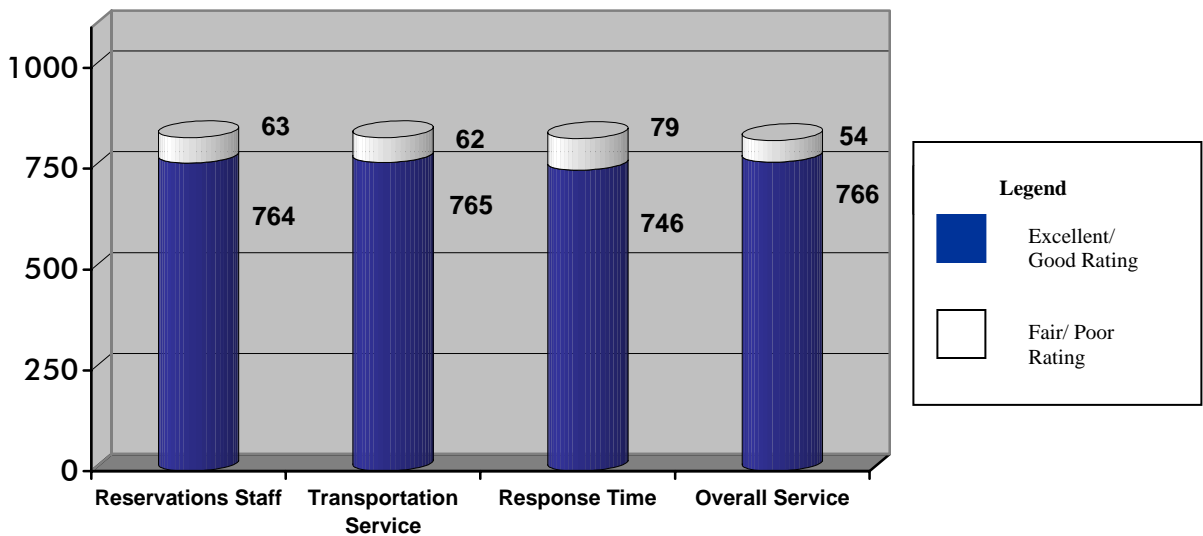
Figure 9 | Numbers and Percentages of Responses Received

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, 765 of respondents gave the Transportation Service a positive rating, noted in the darker area, compared to merely 62 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?

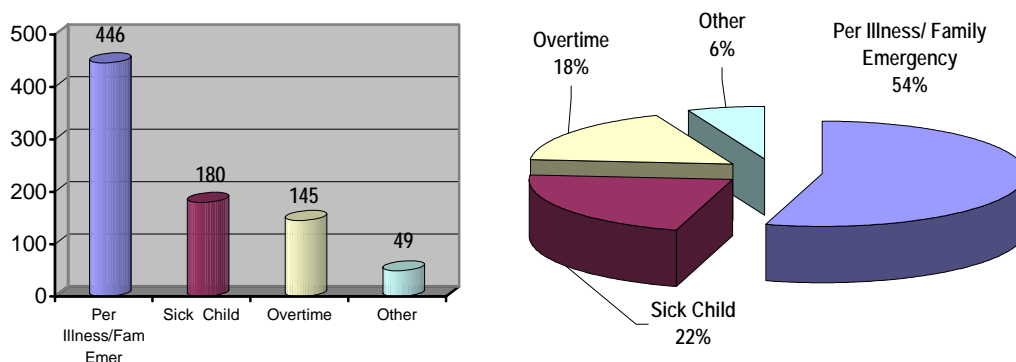
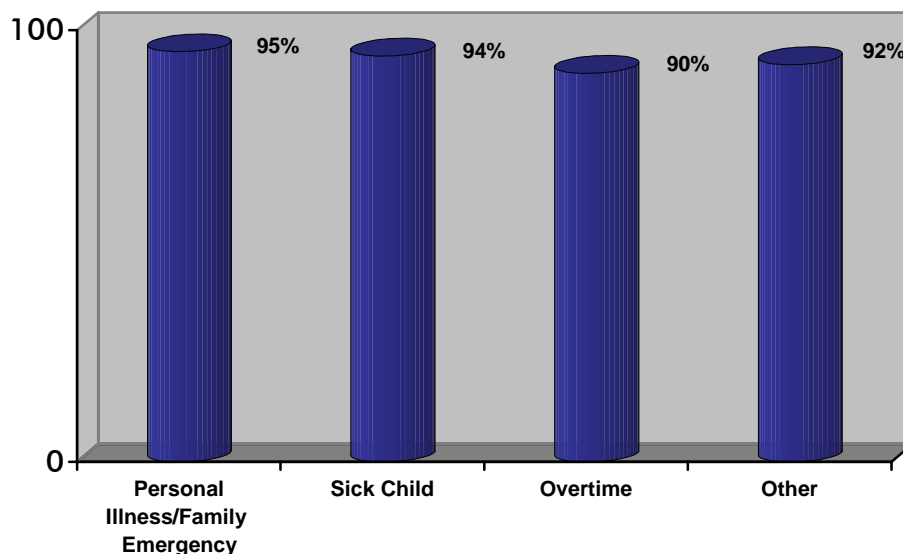


Figure 12 | Percentage of Positive Responses to Overall GRH Service by Reason for Trip

Excellent/Good Rating: Overall Satisfaction Category



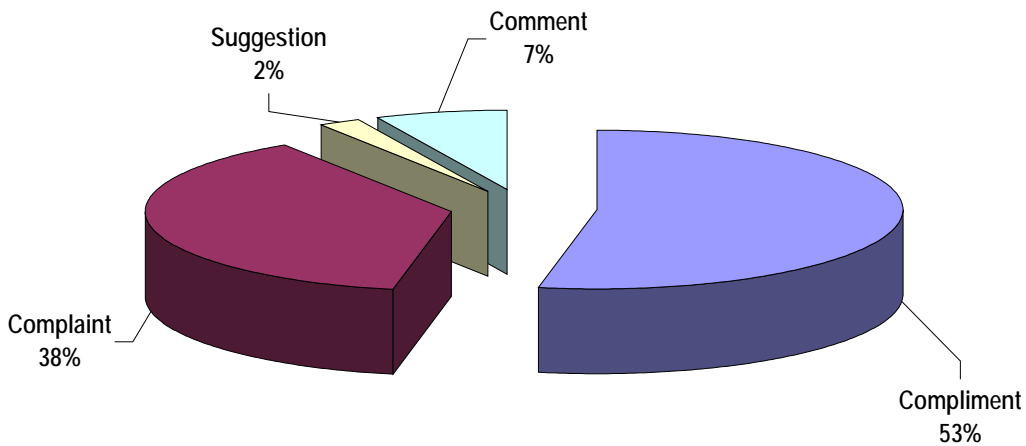
This bar graph indicates that overall satisfaction with the GRH program remained consistently high, regardless of the reason for taking a GRH trip with a 90% or above positive rating in all categories. At 90%, the least satisfied group were those who used the service for overtime.

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 314 out of a total 827 returned survey cards had written responses. Although the number of written responses declined dramatically over the previous fiscal year, from 60% of all survey cards in FY06 to 38% in FY07, the sharp drop was closer in line to FY05 when 41% sent back a written response.

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.

Figure 13 | Percentage of Written Responses



Compliments

With 167 compliments, positive feedback was the most common type of written response. The overwhelming 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 19%; Overall Service 71%; Reservations Staff 15% and Response Time 9%. 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 about the Taxi/Rental Service almost exclusively pertain to taxi trips, as only 1% of the trips used the rental car service.

Samples of actual compliments from FY07:

- *I have at least ten friends who have joined commuter connections. This is an excellent service. I cannot thank you enough for getting me home!*
- *I just moved into the area a couple months ago and never heard of program until a coworker told me about it. I think it is an awesome program.*
- *I love this service. It makes it much easier to embrace public transportation.*
- *I have belonged to your program for several years. But this was the first time I had to use it. It worked out great!!*
- *I received a call from school that my son had been to the nurse's office 3 times and my husband was out of town. I was very worried that it would be 2 hr before I got to him or cost \$60-\$100 for a cab fare. Your reservation staff was stupendous. I got to my son 40 minutes after calling.*
- *Cabbie was clean, nice and polite. It was a pleasant experience.*
- *Everyone at Commuter Connections was awesome*
- *Excellent service. The driver did not accept Tip. Very well mannered driver*
- *Fabulous! It gives me great peace of mind*
- *The person who answered the phone was very polite and the driver was also very nice and polite. This is the first time I've used GRH*
- *First time I've used the service. Very impressed. Thankful it's available to mass transit users.*
- *This is an effective back-up plan for bicycle commuting*
- *Great Service-this helps to encourage use of public transportation*
- *Great Response time and service from both GRH program and taxi service*
- *Having commuter connections makes me feel secure in my decision to use public transportation*
- *I am extremely grateful to GRH and company supporting such program. Having been able to be there for my family during a medical emergency is priceless!! Thank you very much*
- *I am so thankful for GRH ride. My husband was in intensive care and I needed to get to him*
- *I am utterly impressed by the speed professionalism, and courtesy of this wonderful service.*
- *The lady I called was very concerned and sympathetic- I appreciate her kindness. I was leaving to take my husband to the hospital. Thanks*
- *I've been in the program for years and never had to use it. My first experience exceeded expectations I'm so grateful for this program*
- *Makes it much easier to carpool. In fact, couldn't carpool without it*
- *Outstanding service! My wife got sick and I was able to get a taxi in five minutes so I could help her and watch our two young children*
- *Simply Amazing; exceeded every expectation of service, convenience and value*

Complaints

A total of 118 complaints were received about experiences with the GRH service. Of respondents who lodged a complaint, 28 or 14% also gave a compliment. The break down of complaints by category are as follows: Taxi/Rental Service 49%; Overall Service 21%; Reservations Staff 43% and Response Time 35%. Note that some respondents complain about more than one area, therefore percentages add up to more than 100 percent. The majority of complaints, centered on the Taxi/rental car service. It should be noted however that the complaints received 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 not unexpected, 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 FY07:

- *Cab had a bag of stinking garbage in back seat.*
- *Driver had to stop for gas. Needed to be at hospital and this added time.*
- *I did not care for the cab driver or his snake skin cover for his steering wheel-very eerie!*
- *I didn't appreciate taxi driver asking me for a tip*
- *I had bronchitis and the driver had cracks in the windows for air ventilation*
- *I had to call back to find out where the taxi was. It had been waiting for me for over 5min*
- *I turned in my metro fare but have not rec'd reimbursement yet*
- *I waited longer than I was told for a taxi*

- *I was told by a staff member that the computer system was down when I called. The computer problems are probably why I spent over 10 minutes on the phone to request the ride*
- *Initial operator I called was unfriendly and sounded very skeptical of my need for a ride. Didn't like her attitude*
- *Only complaint was the time it took to speak with someone*
- *Taxi broke down at the end of the trip*
- *Taxi driver had significant trouble staying awake*
- *The cab driver was rude. I was getting sick on the way home and he wouldn't pull over*
- *The cab left at first and said he didn't see me. Then returned 11 minutes later*
- *The car did not have air conditioning, and it was a hot day which required the windows open and I have pollen allergies*
- *The driver was a little negative*
- *There was a little confusion regarding payment. I paid for the ride but was later reimbursed*

Comments and Suggestions

Generally comments were prone to be either a compliment or a complaint. Comments and/or suggestions however were received by 29 respondents, representing 9% of all written responses.

Sample of actual comments & suggestions from FY 2007:

- *Consider sending these evaluations via email. You can really the save the environment and you'll probably get a better response rate*
- *Great service! I hope people do not abuse this*
- *Please don't cancel this service!!!! This is a lifeline for us*
- *I should not have to be in my building for taxi to pick me up*

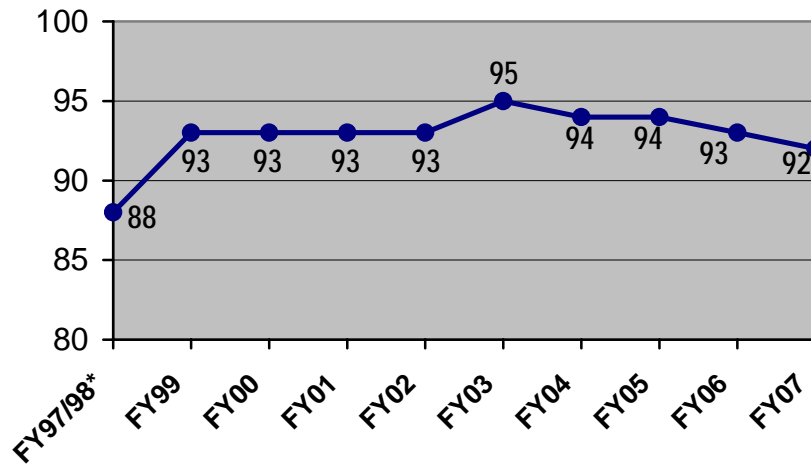
Comparison to Previous Fiscal Years

Reservations Staff

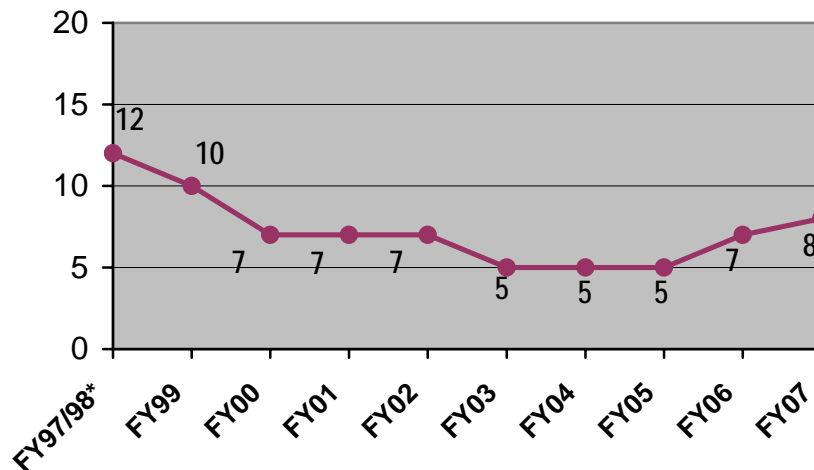
Figure 14 | Percentages of Responses Received for Question One Over All Fiscal Years

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

Excellent and Good Combined Ratings



Poor and Fair Combined Ratings



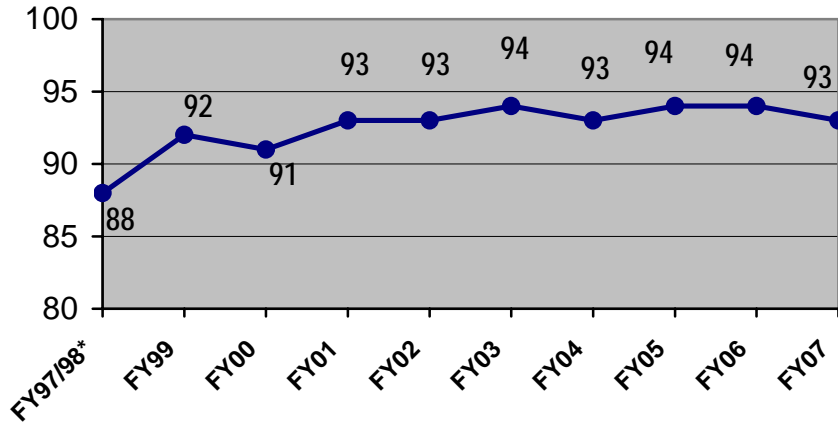
* FY97 was the first year the program began and data was only collected for a small portion of the time. FY97 data was combined together into FY98 to make it statistically significant.

Transportation Service

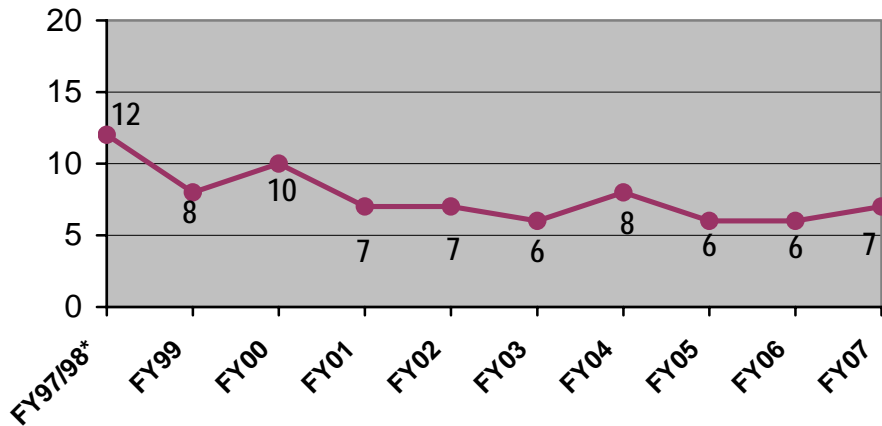
Figure 15 | Percentages of Responses Received for Question Two Over All Fiscal Years

How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?

Excellent and Good Combined Ratings



Poor and Fair Combined Ratings



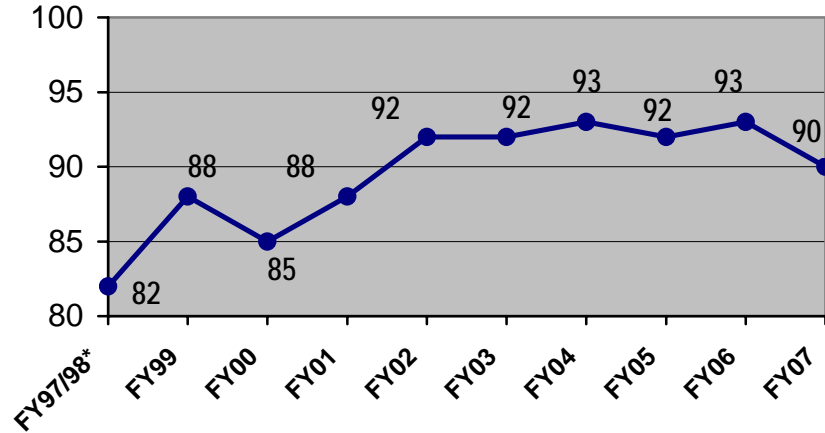
* FY97 was the first year the program began and data was only collected for a small portion of the time. FY97 data was combined together into FY98 to make it statistically significant.

Response Time

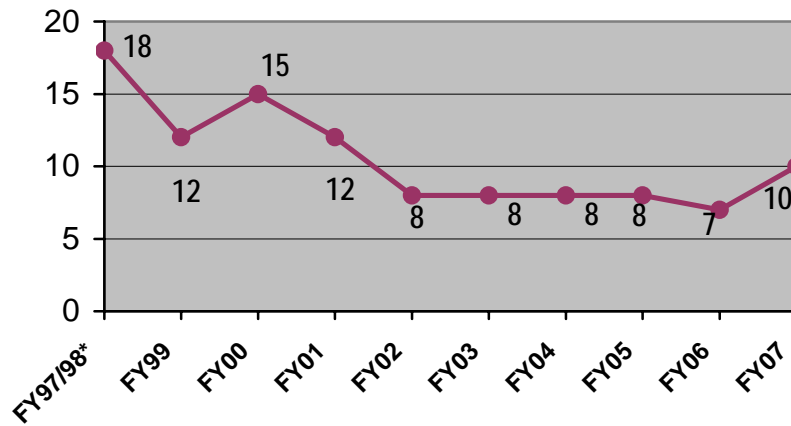
Figure 16 | Percentages of Responses Received for Question Three Over All Fiscal Years

How would you rate our response time?

Excellent and Good Combined Ratings



Poor and Fair Combined Ratings



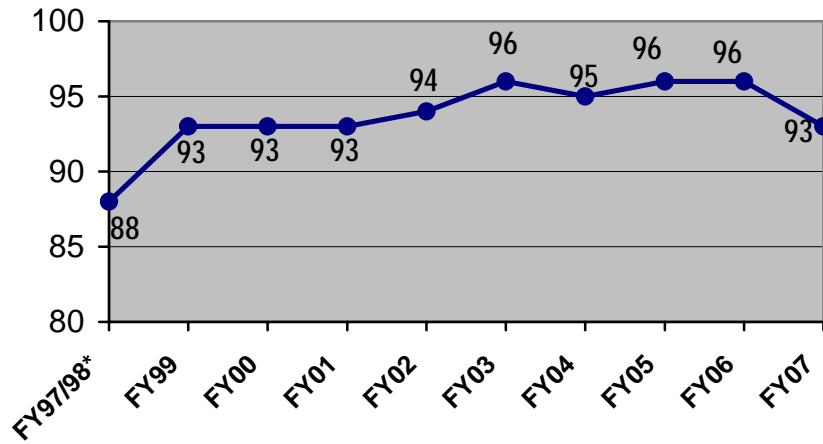
- FY97 was the first year the program began and data was only collected for a small portion of the time. FY97 data was combined together into FY98 to make it statistically significant.

Overall Service

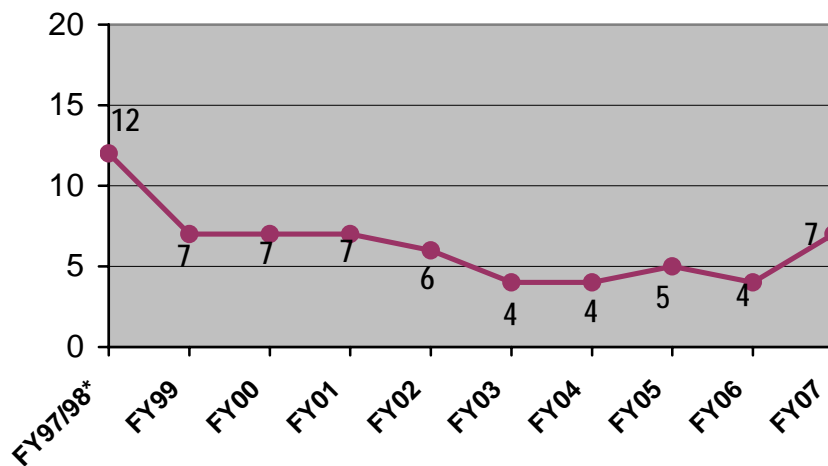
Figure 17 | Percentages of Responses Received for Question Four Over All Fiscal Years

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 2,960 surveys distributed in fiscal year 2007, 827 completed surveys were received. The vast majority, 93% of the survey respondents were satisfied with the overall GRH service. Written responses were entered on a third of the 827 returned survey cards, the majority of which were compliments. Good or above ratings were given by 90% of the respondents for all categories. Average response wait was 17 minutes and 88.5% 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	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07
How would you rate the service you received from	Excellent	62%	66%	70%	74%	76%	78%	78%	78%	78%	76%
	Good	26%	27%	23%	19%	17%	17%	16%	16%	15%	16%
	Fair	6%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%
	Poor	6%	5%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%	4%
How would you rate the taxi or rental car service?	Excellent	59%	66%	65%	70%	69%	70%	70%	73%	76%	68%
	Good	29%	26%	26%	23%	24%	24%	23%	21%	18%	25%
	Fair	6%	5%	6%	4%	4%	4%	6%	4%	4%	5%
	Poor	6%	3%	4%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%
How would you rate our response time?	Excellent	58%	60%	65%	70%	73%	74%	75%	75%	77%	74%
	Good	24%	28%	20%	18%	19%	18%	18%	17%	16%	17%
	Fair	9%	6%	10%	7%	3%	4%	5%	5%	4%	4%
	Poor	9%	6%	5%	5%	5%	4%	3%	3%	3%	5%
Overall, how would you rate our GRH service?	Excellent	61%	68%	69%	73%	78%	79%	78%	78%	78%	75%
	Good	27%	25%	24%	20%	16%	17%	17%	18%	18%	18%
	Fair	7%	5%	4%	5%	3%	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%
	Poor	5%	2%	3%	2%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%
Totals	Excellent	60%	65%	67%	72%	73%	75%	75%	76%	79%	73%
	Good	26%	27%	23%	20%	19%	19%	19%	18%	17%	19%
	Fair	7%	5%	6%	5%	4%	4%	4%	4%	2.5%	4.0%
	Poor	7%	4%	4%	3%	4%	2%	2%	2%	1.5%	4.0%

* 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 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.
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 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 acts of God.
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 holidays and unplanned Federal Government office closings. GRH TRIPS MUST BE TAKEN BEFORE 10:00 P.M. Holidays include: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday, 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, 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 is made by 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 or all 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.

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.

1/16/07