

Alameda County
Congestion Management Agency



Program Evaluation
Executive Summary
2007

MAY 2008

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (CMA) Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Program has been in operation since April 9, 1998. This report presents the results of the tenth annual program evaluation and covers program operations during 2007 including a comparison with previous years. The evaluation provides information about:

1. The effectiveness of the program's administration;
2. Statistics on employer and employee participation and trips taken;
3. The program's success in causing an increase in the use of alternative modes; and
4. Recommendations about any area(s) that need modification or expansion.

This executive summary includes a program description, overview of historical trends, summary of major findings of the evaluation, and program recommendations.

Program Description

The Alameda County CMA Guaranteed Ride Home Program is sponsored by the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency (CMA) and is funded with Transportation Funds for Clean Air (TFCA) from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District.

The GRH Program provides a "guaranteed ride home" to any registered employee working for a participating employer in cases of emergency on days the employee has used an alternative mode of transportation to get to work. Alternative modes include: carpools, vanpools, bus, train, ferry, walking and bicycling. Participating employers must have at least 75 employees at worksites located in Alameda County. As of December 31, 2007, 155 employers and 4,437 employees were registered with the program.

The objective of the program is to maximize modal shift from driving alone to commute alternatives including transit, carpools, vanpools, bicycling and walking. Based on this stated objective, the program can be considered a success. Each year of operation, the program has seen an increase in the number of participants who use alternative modes and an increase in the frequency with which they use alternative modes.

Historical Trends

The Guaranteed Ride Home Program began as a demonstration program in 1998. Over the course of the last ten years, GRH has grown into a smoothly operating program with 155 registered employers, about 4,400 registered employees, and 98 trips provided this year.

Figure ES-1 Employer and Employee Trends

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total Number of Employers	72	100	119	132	127	110	120	131	142	155
Total Number of Employees	880	1,674	2,265	2,759	2,664	2,785	3,268	3,638	4,107	4,437
Total Number of Trips Taken	57	156	168	148	144	149	141	82	107	98

Seventy-two (72) employers registered with the program during the initial six-month demonstration period. In 2007, 18 employers registered for the GRH program. A total of 225 employers have registered with the program since its inception. Due to employers moving, going out of business, etc. the program currently has 155 participating employers.

During the initial six-month demonstration period, about 880 employees joined the Guaranteed Ride Home Program. In 2007, 514 employees registered. Over 6,000 employees have registered with the program since its inception. The program now has 4,437 actively registered employees.

Based on the fact that each registered participant may take up to six trips in a one-year period, the rate that guaranteed rides are taken is very low. Most program participants take a guaranteed ride home very infrequently or not at all. For example, at the end of 2007, there were a total of 26,622 potential rides based on a total enrollment of 4,437 employees. However, only 98 trips were actually needed that year (approximately 0.4% of potential trips). Of the 6,178 employees ever registered for the program, at the end of 2007, 5,561 (90%) had never taken a ride.

A total of 1,261 trips have been provided from the time of the program's inception through the end of 2007. During the 2007 operating year, 98 trips were taken, continuing a decreasing trend in the number of rides per year. Most registered employees (86%) have never taken a trip. Of those who have taken trips, the vast majority (80%) have taken only one or two trips. This demonstrates that participants see the GRH program as an "insurance" policy and do not abuse the program or take more rides per year than they need. The program is available if and when an emergency or unscheduled overtime arises and provides participants with peace of mind knowing that they can get home under unexpected circumstances.

Figure ES-2 illustrates some key historical trends for the Guaranteed Ride Home Program.

Figure ES-2 Guaranteed Ride Home Program Historical Trends

Trend	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Program Participants										
Total Number of Employers	72	100	119	132	127	110	120	131	142	155
New Employers Registered	72	28	19	13	12	14	16	22	12	18
Total Number of Employees	880	1,674	2,265	2,759	2,664	2,785	3,268	3,638	4,107	4,437
New Employees Registered	880	794	591	494	525	710	543	603	550	514
Trip Statistics										
Total Number of Trips Taken	57	156	168	149	145	151	143	87	107	98
Total Number of Rental Car Trips	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	8	10	18	9	18	18
Total Number of Taxi Trips	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	137	141	125	78	89	80
Average Trips per Month	6.3	13	14	12.3	12	12.4	11.8	6.8	8.9	8.2
Average Trip Distance (miles)	28.7	34.96	36.9	42.1	42.02	42.9	39.8	42.6	41.8	41.6
Average Trip Cost	\$54.51	\$65.25	\$70.45	\$84.02	\$88.18	\$93.64	\$80.92	\$87.78	\$89.48	\$86.13
Rental Car Savings	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$421	\$759	\$1,015	\$442	\$1,221	\$1,316
Number of potential trips per year	5,280	10,044	13,590	16,554	15,984	16,710	19,608	21,828	24,642	26,622
Percent of potential trips taken each year	1.08%	1.55%	1.24%	0.90%	0.91%	0.90%	0.73%	0.40%	0.43%	0.37%
Survey Results										
Number of Surveys Collected	215	350	270	346	517	619	658	716	732	728
Survey Response Rate	N/A	21%	12%	13%	19%	22%	20%	20%	18%	16%
Percent Who Would Not Use an Alternative Mode or Would Use Less Frequently without GRH	15%	16%	19%	19%	34%	41%	47%	46%	40%	41%
Increase in the Percent of Those Using Alternative Modes Four or More Times a Week	N/A	10%	15%	8%	15%	17%	14%	21%	19%	18%
Number of Single Occupancy Vehicle Trips Reduced per Week	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3,768	3,946	3,774	3,318	3,709	3,499

Major Findings of the Evaluation

The program evaluation consisted of an examination of the program's administrative functions, statistics on employer and employee participation and use, data from the surveys of participating employees, and recommendations for program changes and enhancements. The following sections present the major findings from the evaluation.

Program Administration

Program Operating Principles

- The use limitation of six trips per year continues to be appropriate. Very few program participants have reached the limit since the program's inception. No one in 2007 reached the six trip limit. The most trips taken by one person in 2007 was three.
- The rental car demonstration program was successfully implemented in October 2002 in the Tri-Valley area (Dublin, Livermore and Pleasanton), and county-wide in April 2004. A new policy went into effect in 2006 requiring participants to use a rental car for any non-emergency trip over 50 miles. The program realized an estimated savings of over \$1,300 on ride costs in 2007.

Marketing and Promotions

- Approximately one-tenth of program resources are dedicated to marketing and promotion. This time is spent marketing both to employers and their employees in the form of making calls, distributing flyers, and giving presentations and attending events. The program has sought to leverage these resources by relying on participating employers to promote the GRH Program internally, and by seeking co-marketing opportunities with local transit agencies and with organizations that promote commute alternatives. In 2007, the program focused on public relations by attending employer events and focusing efforts on employers with 75 to 99 employees. By using an InfoUSA list of Alameda County employers with between 75 to 99 employees, GRH staff called companies to inform them of their eligibility in the GRH program and provide information on the benefits of the program. A marketing drive was also targeted on Hacienda Business Park in Pleasanton involving a mailer, phone calls to companies, and newsletter articles to increase employee and employer participation.
- The availability of the marketing materials in electronic format via the internet or email upon request continues to be a useful and inexpensive tool for promoting the program.
- The website is updated to include changes in the program, such as the new rental car program, and to clarify the program, as necessary, such as providing a clear description of the instant enrollment program.

Employer and Employee Participation

Employer and Employee Registrations

- Both the number of new employers and new employees increased in 2007. Registered employers increased by 9% and registered employees increased by 8%. As of December 31, 2007, 155 employers and 4,437 employees were registered.

- North and east Alameda County continue to be the areas with the most employers enrolled in the program. The city of Pleasanton is the location of the largest number of employers registered with the program, followed by Oakland.

Trips Taken

- From the program's inception in 1998 through 2007, a total of 1,261 trips (1,180 taxi trips and 81 rental car trips) have been taken. Ninety-eight trips were taken during the 2007 calendar year for an average of 8.2 trips per month. The number of trips taken in 2007 represented an 8% decrease over last year's total.
- Eighty-six percent of the employees enrolled have never taken a trip. Of the employees who have taken a trip since the program inception (1998), 80% have taken only one or two rides.
- "Personal illness" was the most common reason for taking a trip in 2007 (28% of trips), followed by the "Carpool or vanpool driver had to stay late or leave early" (23%).
- Those who carpool or vanpool are more likely to use a guaranteed ride home trip than those who use other alternative commute modes. Sixty-one percent of guaranteed rides home were used by car- and vanpoolers.
- The average trip distance decreased slightly in 2007. The average trip distance for all trips in 2007 was 41.6 miles, a 0.2 mile decrease from last year. The individual trip distance averages for taxi and rental car trips changed by less than one mile each in 2007. The average taxi trip distance declined to 39.2 miles and the average rental car trip distance increased to 51.9 miles¹.
- The average taxi trip cost in 2007 was \$92.44, a 4% decrease from 2006.
- The cost of a rental car trip is \$55.00. It is estimated that the use of rental cars in 2007 saved \$1,316 in trip costs. With the start of the rental car marketing campaign in 2008, the program hopes to increase cost savings due to rental car usage.

Employee Commute Patterns

- The most common trip-origin cities are Oakland, Pleasanton, and Fremont. The most common trip-destination cities are Oakland, Manteca, and Modesto.
- The most common trip destination county is Alameda County, followed by San Joaquin County.

Employee Survey

The 2007 survey was distributed and completed primarily online. We attempted to contact all employer representatives (some were non-responsive despite repeated attempts) to request their assistance with the distribution of the survey. When employers were not available or by special request, we contacted employees with the survey directly. Of the 4,437 employees currently enrolled in the program, 728 completed the survey, resulting in a 16% response rate. Of the surveys, 98% were completed online. The respondents represent 68 (out of 155) different participating employers.

¹ The average annual rental car mileage was revised for the 2007 evaluation report to provide an accurate comparison with taxicab mileage. Previous years used the total rental car mileage (roundtrip). This has been corrected to a one-way trip.

Use of Alternative Modes

The Guaranteed Ride Home Program continues to be successful in encouraging the use of alternative modes. According to 2007 survey responses:

- When asked how important GRH was in their decision to stop driving alone, almost 70% of respondents who used to drive alone said that it was at least somewhat important.
- Sixty-one percent of all respondents reported that the GRH Program encourages them to use alternative modes more days than they would otherwise. If the GRH Program were not available, the majority (59%) reported that they would continue to use an alternative mode.
- The survey asked respondents how they traveled to work at present and before they registered for the GRH Program. Both before and after the program, the most common modes were BART, driving alone, and carpooling. Drive alone trips, however, declined after registering with the GRH Program, while BART and carpool use increased.
- Using these survey findings, we were able to extrapolate the impact of the program on travel behavior of all participants. The program reduces 3,499 single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips per week.

Other Commute Characteristics

- Commute distances of program participants are generally 50 miles or less (87%).
- Most program participants travel to work during the peak commute hours of 7-9 AM in the mornings (65%) and 4-6 PM in the evenings (75%).

Customer Service Ratings

The annual evaluation survey includes two questions to evaluate participant's level of satisfaction with the customer service provided in the program. Additional information on service satisfaction is collected in the survey participants return after they have taken a ride.

- The administrative functions of the GRH Program continue to receive very high ratings for the quality of customer service, consistent with previous years' evaluations.
- Passengers were very positive in their evaluation of the transportation services provided through GRH with over 80% of users rating the services as "excellent" or "good".

Employer Survey

The 2007 program evaluation includes the fourth survey of employer representatives and the second to be available on-line. Of the 155 employers currently enrolled in the program, 41 surveys were completed, resulting in a 26% response rate.

Use of Alternative Modes

The survey asked the employer representatives how important the program is in encouraging employees to use alternative commute modes more often. A large majority (87%) reported that they feel participation in the program encourages more alternative mode use². This is down, however, from 95% in 2006.

- The survey asked respondents if their company offered additional commuter benefits to employees. Most employers (68%) reported that they do provide other transportation subsidy programs. The results show that most participating companies are actively promoting alternative modes.

Program Management

- The survey asked respondents how long they have managed the program for their company. Two-thirds of respondents have been with GRH for one or more years, compared with 85% last year. When GRH staff contacted the employer representatives this year, GRH staff encountered a large number of employers who had experienced employer representative turnover.
- When asked about the workload that GRH presents, all employers reported that their workload was “manageable” or the program is “not much work”.
- One of the important features of the program is the instant enrollment voucher which allows persons not registered in the program to become instantly enrolled and receive a guaranteed ride home in case of emergencies. Seventy-four percent of employer representatives stated that they have never issued an instant enrollment voucher.

Customer Service Ratings

The survey includes two questions to evaluate the employer representatives' level of satisfaction with the customer service provided in the program.

- “Clarity of information” provided by program staff received very high ratings, with 92% of respondents stating that information was “excellent” or “good”. When asked about the hotline assistance³ they received, 53% of the respondents stated that they received “good” or “excellent” service and 47% reported that they “did not know”. No employers reported receiving “fair” or “poor” service via telephone.

² Employers were asked for their opinion regarding if the GRH program encourages employees to use alternative commute modes more often. Employers did not take a poll or individual survey of their registered employees.

³ GRH staff operates a telephone hotline weekdays from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM in order to provide information about the program to current and prospective employees and employers and to answer questions about the program. The hotline is not intended to respond to participant emergencies or provide 24-hour assistance.

2007 Program Summary

The Alameda County CMA Guaranteed Ride Home Program has been successful in achieving the goal of bringing about a modal shift from driving alone to alternative transportation modes. Data from this year’s participant survey indicate that the program is continuing to reduce the number of drive-alone trips made within the county by eliminating one of the significant barriers to alternative mode use – namely, the fear of being unable to return home in the event of an emergency.

In 2007, a Request for Proposals was distributed by the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency soliciting proposals to operate the Alameda County Guaranteed Ride Home Program. Due to the consultant selection process, a new contract was not signed between the ACCMA and Nelson\Nygaard to operate the program until October 31, 2007. As a result of limited budget resources available before the new contract was signed, staff was only able to maintain current operations of the program and was not able to fully develop all of the 2007 recommendations until the 2008 calendar year. Guaranteed Ride Home staff recommends that the 2007 recommendations be continued in 2008.

Recommendations for 2007, made in the 2006 evaluation report, and their outcome, follows:

Figure ES-3 2007 Program Summary

Recommendation	Outcome/Status
1. Continue operations and marketing, including maintaining website and conducting employee and employer surveys	GRH staff continually markets the program and updates the website. The employee and employer surveys for the 2007 program evaluation were completed in March 2008. Results are included in this report.
2. Monitor and market the 75-99 employee requirement	Using an InfoUSA employer contact list, staff performed cold calls and sent out mailers to employers with between 75-99 employees. Only four businesses meeting the criteria registered in 2007. Staff has encountered difficulty enrolling smaller businesses. Larger employers often have transportation managers, transportation coordinators, or persons in charge of employee benefits programs that can easily be the GRH contact person and distribute information to employees. Small businesses often do not have dedicated transportation staff. GRH staff recommends focusing on business parks, districts, and Chambers of Commerce to distribute program information. GRH staff will contact other Bay Area GRH programs in effort to determine how programs with no minimum employee requirement target and attract smaller businesses.

Recommendation	Outcome/Status
3. Monitor and market the 50+ mile car rental requirement	Rental usage has increased as a percentage of the total trips taken in 2007 although the number of rental car trips is equivalent to the 2006 total. As part of the 2007 employee and employer survey, all employers were contacted via phone and email about the rental car requirement. The surveys also included information about the rental car requirement. Participants using their GRH voucher for a taxicab who live over 50 miles from their workplace are now contacted by telephone and email to remind the participant of the program requirement. In the two months since the marketing campaign, rental usage has increased from 18% in 2007 to 30% in February and March of 2008. Staff will continue to monitor and market rental car use.
4. Develop and implement a way to focus marketing of rental car requirement on major employers	Staff was unable to fully develop and implement a targeted marketing effort on major employers in 2007 due to the contract going into effect later than usual (October 2007), and staff focusing on other changes to the program (such as the rental car requirement, developing a carshare pilot program, and initiating two pilot programs with the Emeryville TMA and Berkeley DBA). GRH staff did attend a manager's informational session at NUMMI in 2007 to discuss the GRH program and the rental car requirement. NUMMI was the largest user of GRH in 2007 with 20 rides used. Starting in May 2008, major employers will be contacted to create a targeted marketing effort to inform employer contacts and participants of the rental car requirement. Marketing methods will be tailored to the employer based on employer contact feedback and may include – email blasts, newsletter articles, individual emails or mailers to participants, and GRH staff visits to discuss the requirement with staff.
5. Develop and implement a pilot carshare program in Oakland and Emeryville	Staff has contacted ZipCar about partnering with the GRH Program. Staff met with ZipCar staff to discuss program details and will continue pursuing this recommendation.
6. Initiate a pilot program with one or two Transportation Management Associations	In March 2008, staff met with the Emeryville TMA and Downtown Berkeley Association to launch pilot programs. Staff is currently preparing the marketing launch.

Below is an update on the status of the 2007 program elements that were recommended by the CMA Board in 2006.

1. Continue operations and marketing, including maintaining website and conducting employee and employer surveys.

The Guaranteed Ride Home Program entered its ninth year of operations in 2007. The program added 18 new employers in 2007 and over 500 employee participants. Staff continued to market the program to employees and employers via newsletters, emails, telephone calls, mailers, attendance of employee benefits fairs, etc. Employee and employer surveys are completed annually as part of the annual program evaluation report.

2. Continue to monitor and market the 75-99 employee requirement.

In 2007, four new businesses with between 75-99 employees not associated with business parks or districts registered for the GRH Program. Besides marketing efforts to encourage enrollment of new employers, the reduced employee requirement has not led to an increase in GRH staff administrative time. The table below shows all businesses registered with between 75-99 employees, the date of registration, and how they found out about the program.

Figure ES-4 New Employers with 75-99 Employees (2007)

Company Name	City	Registration Date	Number of Employees	Information Source
Ruggeri-Jensen-Azar	Pleasanton	2/21/2007	75	Employee Referral
Cell Genesys, Inc.	Hayward	2/27/2007	75	Phone Call
Two Star Dog, Inc.	Berkeley	4/25/2007	75	Phone Call
Agilent Technologies	Pleasanton	9/11/2007	77	Mailer

Marketing efforts completed in 2007 included calling employers using an InfoUSA purchased employer contact information list, mailing information to employers, and contacting Chambers of Commerce in Berkeley and Pleasanton. Chamber contacts were sent information about the program to review and distribute to employers. Staff encountered more difficulty registering these smaller employers than expected. Larger employers often have transportation managers, transportation coordinators, or persons in charge of employee benefits programs that can easily be the GRH contact person and distribute information to employees. We have experienced that smaller businesses often do not have the resources or interest in supporting the GRH Program, especially if employees have not requested the benefit or if they have never heard of the program.

3. Continue to monitor and market the 50+ mile car rental requirement.

In order to efficiently contact employers and employees and concentrate our marketing efforts, GRH staff decided to start a targeted marketing approach to GRH participants as part of the 2007 program evaluation in February 2008.

With the start of the 2007 employee and employer surveys, all employer contacts were contacted via telephone to update their contact information. Employer contacts were reminded of the rental car requirement as part of the telephone call. The 2007 employee and employer surveys were distributed primarily via email and included an explanation of the rental car requirement in the email and on the title page of the survey. Persons not providing the program with an email address were mailed the survey with a cover letter explaining the rental car requirement. The survey itself asked employer and employee participants questions about rental usage and understanding of the requirement. Results of these questions are presented in the employee and employer survey chapters.

All program literature has been updated to state that trips of 50 or more miles require the use of a rental car except in case of emergencies. Literature also states that persons living between 21 and 49 miles from their workplace are strongly encouraged to use a rental car. At approximately 22 miles, the taxicab fare and rental car fee become equal. For simplicity, however, the program recommends that persons living 20 miles or less from their workplace use a taxicab and strongly

encourages persons living over 20 miles but less than 50 miles from their workplace to use a rental car.

An insert is now included in all new participant packets for persons living more than 20 miles from their workplace, which reinforces the rental car requirement for persons living more than 50 miles from their workplace and encourages use of a rental car use for persons living over 20 miles from their workplace.

Participants using their GRH voucher for a taxicab who live over 50 miles from their workplace are now contacted by telephone and email to remind the participant of the program requirement.

In 2007, the rental car usage rate was 18.4%, up from 16.8% in 2006. Since the launch of the marketing campaign in February 2008, rental car usage has increased to 30%.⁴

4. Continue to develop and implement a way to focus marketing of rental car requirement on major employers.

The 2006 evaluation report recommended targeting major employers to market the rental car requirement. This recommendation has not been specifically implemented. Due to the contract going into effect later than usual (October 2007), staff focusing efforts regarding the rental car requirement, developing a carshare pilot program, and initiating two pilot programs with the Emeryville Transportation Management Association and Berkeley Downtown Association, staff was unable to fully develop and implement a targeted marketing effort on major employers.

GRH staff did, however, attend a manager's informational session at NUMMI in 2007. GRH staff gave a Powerpoint presentation to NUMMI managers about the program and the rental car requirement and answered questions. After the meeting, program information and the rental car requirement were included in the company newsletter. Despite these efforts, zero rental car rides have been used by NUMMI participants since the rental car program was expanded to include the entire county in 2006. Employee survey results showed that half of respondents did not know about the rental car requirement before taking the survey. For respondents who have used a guaranteed ride home and live over 50 miles from their workplace but did not use a rental car, respondents stated that they did not use a rental car because the respondent needed the ride when Enterprise Rent-a-Car was not open, a rental car was less convenient than a taxicab, and the respondent was unaware how the respondent would receive the rental car and return the car the following day. Because NUMMI employees often do not work during Enterprise office hours (7:30 AM to 5:30 PM on weekdays), a rental car may not be a feasible option for many NUMMI participants. NUMMI was the largest user of the program in 2007 with 20 rides used.

5. Develop and implement a pilot carshare program in Oakland and Emeryville.

As part of the 2006 evaluation report, the CMA board recommended that staff develop and implement a pilot carshare program. The GRH Program strives to provide a convenient way home for persons in case of emergencies. More options in what type of ride home a participant can take would help encourage registration and the CMA's goal in reducing single occupancy vehicle trips.

⁴ Statistics are based on GRH trips taken in February and March 2008.

With a carshare option, participants could choose a guaranteed ride home in a taxicab, rental car, or carshare vehicle. Carshare would provide added convenience for participants in addition to providing the program with a lower cost alternative to taxicabs for longer trips. Carshare vehicles would provide a guaranteed ride home to persons working after 5:30 PM when Enterprise Rent-a-Car is closed or for persons who need a guaranteed ride home immediately but are not able to wait for a cab or for Enterprise to drop off a rental car. Compared with a taxi, participants could use the carshare vehicle for intermediate stops as they please without having to direct a taxi driver to multiple locations related to their emergency or unexpected circumstance. Carshare also does not charge for gas, as in a rental car, nor for tips, as in a cab. As a result, carshare would provide the only truly zero out of pocket expense for a guaranteed ride home. Depending on an employer's location, a carshare vehicle may be conveniently located near the participant, allowing the participant to easily secure a guaranteed ride home via a carshare vehicle without having to travel out of their way. All these added benefits and conveniences would be available to GRH participants with a carshare option in addition to providing the program with cost savings for longer trips.

Staff is currently in contact with ZipCar⁵ to develop a one-year carshare demonstration program in the cities of Oakland and/or Emeryville where large concentrations of GRH participants are located. ZipCar is an attractive option for GRH since both programs work to promote the use of alternative modes and ZipCar's fleet includes hybrid vehicles. In addition, ZipCar costs significantly less than taxis for longer trips. The \$60 per ZipCar trip is slightly higher than the rental car service (\$55 per ride), but lower than longer distance taxi rides at \$2.40 to \$2.50 per mile. The ZipCar cost includes insurance and fuel. ZipCar could provide a less expensive option than taxicabs during shift hours when rental cars are not available. A comparison of the three modes shows that for longer trips rental car and ZipCar are more cost effective options than taxi.

A 50 mile trip would cost:

- Rental Car = \$55
- ZipCar = \$60
- Taxi = \$122 (\$2.40 per mile and \$2 flag fee)

6. Initiate a pilot program with one or two Transportation Management Associations.

In order to evaluate the cost effectiveness and staff resources needed to further reduce the eligibility requirement to include employers with less than 75 employees, GRH staff has initiated two pilot programs with two business associations – the Downtown Berkeley Association (DBA) and the Emeryville Transportation Management Association (TMA). Both associations have expressed enthusiastic support for the program and are excited with having the GRH Program available to their businesses and employees. The Downtown Berkeley Association is comprised of over 600 businesses in Downtown Berkeley and the Emeryville TMA includes all businesses within the City of Emeryville. While a large number of businesses in each association have less than 75 employees, the total number of employees in each association is well over the required 75 employee minimum.

⁵ City CarShare was not interested in pursuing a partnership with the Guaranteed Ride Home program. FlexCar and ZipCar merged in 2007 and assumed the name ZipCar.

In March 2008, GRH and CMA staff met with the executive directors of both organizations to review the program, outline the responsibilities of each association, and agree upon a marketing approach. Marketing activities will begin in April 2008 and will include a general mailer to employers, emails to employers, newsletter articles, flyers, telephone calls, etc.

2008 Recommendations

As stated previously, GRH staff recommends that the 2007 recommendations be continued in 2008. The recommendations follow:

1. Continue operations and marketing, including maintaining website and conducting employee and employer surveys.

Operations of the GRH program will continue in 2008 including database maintenance, general marketing, and maintaining the website. Employee and employer surveys are completed annually as part of the annual program evaluation report. The surveys for the 2008 evaluation are scheduled for late January/early February 2009.

2. Continue to monitor and market the 75-99 employee requirement.

In 2008, GRH staff recommends concentrating on business parks, districts, and Chambers of Commerce. Business parks and districts allow GRH information to get to employers through the park or district management instead of simply through cold calling and mailers. Receiving information through the business association “legitimizes” the program to uninformed employers and familiarizes the employer with the program, making follow-up much easier.

In addition, GRH staff will contact other Bay Area GRH programs in effort to determine how programs with no minimum employee requirement target and attract smaller businesses.

GRH staff will continue to monitor the impacts the new requirement has on the cost of managing the program. Monitoring will include how much extra is being spent due to the changes. At the end of the year, a summary table will be prepared to show the new companies, number of employees, and how they heard about the program.

3. Continue to monitor and market the 50+ mile car rental requirement.

Staff recommends continuing this recommendation and monitoring the success of the marketing focus started in 2008. In order to efficiently contact employers and employees and concentrate our marketing efforts, staff will target marketing to GRH participants as part of the 2008 program evaluation. This will also include continuing to telephone and e-mail participants who use the program and live over 50 miles from their workplace to remind the participant of the program requirement.

4. Continue to develop and implement a way to focus marketing of rental car requirement on major employers.

Starting in May 2008, major employers will be contacted to create a targeted marketing effort to inform employer contacts and participants of the rental car requirement. Marketing methods will be tailored to the employer based on employer representative feedback and may include email blasts, newsletter articles, individual emails or mailers to participants, and GRH staff visits to discuss the requirement with staff.

5. Develop and implement a pilot carshare program in Oakland and Emeryville.

A carshare demonstration program should be implemented first in Emeryville and/or Oakland. These two cities accounted for 27% of registered businesses and 44% of registered participants as of December 31, 2007. With the Emeryville Transportation Management Association (TMA) recently registered in the GRH program and as a result all TMA employers being eligible for the GRH program regardless of size, Emeryville is a great choice to launch the pilot program because of its high concentration of employers and employees and presence of carshare pods⁶. The program also expects to receive a large number of new Emeryville employer and employee registrations due to the TMA enrollment, increasing the attractiveness of launching the pilot program in Emeryville. Oakland also has a high concentration of registered GRH employers and ZipCar pods. In addition, Emeryville has all hybrid ZipCar vehicles and Oakland has some hybrid ZipCar vehicles available allowing participants to obtain a ride in vehicles which produce lower emissions and help mitigate the impact to Bay Area air quality. By concentrating on Emeryville and/or Oakland, the pilot program can more effectively target the program to a large number of registered employers and employees who have access to ZipCar. Currently, the only ZipCar cars in Alameda County are located in the cities Oakland, Emeryville, and Berkeley.

Staff will be continuing efforts to secure a contract with ZipCar to offer the option to GRH participants.

6. Initiate a pilot program with one or two Transportation Management Associations.

The pilot program will be evaluated at six months and at one year after the official marketing launch. The review will include the number of new employers, number of new employees, number of rides taken, administrative time required by GRH staff, and the general feelings and feedback of the executive director of each association. Marketing efforts will continue through the direction of the executive directors of each organization.

Staff recommends continuing this pilot program for one year, then evaluating it.

7. Conduct an independent review of the Guaranteed Ride Home Program within six months.

The Guaranteed Ride Home Program is currently operated by Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates and administered by the Alameda County Congestion Management Agency. As part of program operations, Nelson\Nygaard performs an annual evaluation of the program including making program recommendations and surveying employers and employees. In order to ensure that the program is being administered and operated as efficiently and effectively as possible, a third party is recommended to evaluate the entire program.

To accomplish this task, CMA staff will create an evaluation scope and hire a consultant who will complete an evaluation report of the program within six months of the approval of the 2007 evaluation report. Results of the third party evaluation will be presented to the CMA Board for review and approval.

⁶ Carshare "pods" are locations where carshare vehicles are parked.

8. Develop a plan to evaluate ways to transition employers from Transportation Funds for Clean Air (TFCA) funding for rides to the employers paying for rides for their registered employees.

Since program inception in 1998, the CMA has used the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's (BAAQMD) TFCA funding to operate and administer the Guaranteed Ride Home Program. TFCA funds are used to fund all aspects of the program including paying for the rides. Employers are not responsible for paying for the ride component of the GRH program. Employer and employee participation does not expire and does not have a time limit⁷.

In order to encourage active employer participation and ownership in the GRH program, it is recommended that a plan be developed to limit the time frame in which companies may receive wholly subsidized rides from the program and transition from CMA-funded rides to employer-funded rides. The plan will be prepared and presented to the CMA board within six months of the approval of the 2007 evaluation report. It will include a comparison of how other county programs in the Bay Area are funded.

⁷ Employers and employees must be "active" to remain in the program. Employers who have left the county, have gone out of business, or have decided not to continue participating are unregistered from the program. Employees who leave a registered business for any reason are also unregistered from the program. Once an employer or employee has registered, they do not have to re-register.