

GUARANTEED RIDE HOME PROGRAM EVALUATION 2015



June 2016

Submitted by Nelson\Nygaard



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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Since 1998, the Alameda County Transportation Commission's (Alameda CTC) Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program has provided a free ride home in cases of unexpected personal emergencies for all employees who work in Alameda County. The goal of the program is provide options and opportunities for people who work in Alameda County to get around and chose not to drive alone in their cars.

Evaluation Methodology

Data is gathered from two primary sources in order to evaluate the GRH program: the program's database of registrations and usage as well as participant responses to an online survey in March of each year. **A total of 457 survey responses were received this year—a response rate of 17%. As of December 31, 2015, 2,649 participants were active in the program's database.** The annual survey included 18 questions covering participants' program usage; their perceptions of program information, communications, and administration; and participants' information. The database collects information about participants' home and work locations, their primary means of transportation to work, and the approximate distance of their commutes in miles.

Together, this data forms the basis of the evaluation report. Using this information, estimates of the following program impacts can be calculated:

- Estimated reduction in annual vehicle miles traveled
- Estimated fuel cost savings to participants
- Participant mode shifts due to the program
- Changes in frequency of drive-alone trips

Estimated Program Impacts

The full summary of program impacts is included in Figure 1-1 below. Survey responses indicate the following GRH program impacts:

- 1,251 fewer drive-alone roundtrip commutes (or 2,502 one-way trips) were taken each week in 2015
- 27% of participants drove alone to work prior to participation in GRH as compared with 18% of participants after joining; most of the shift away from driving alone is absorbed by carpooling and vanpooling

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- In 2015, the program supported 2,649 participants, of whom only 36 (1.4%) requested a reimbursement. Of survey respondents (the program’s most active and aware participants), only 3.7% requested a ride reimbursement. These statistics demonstrate the program’s success as a low-cost insurance program providing peace-of-mind for all participating non-driving commuters
- The vast majority of participants (67.3%) heard about GRH through employer-led communications
- 57% of respondents are interested in being able to use peer-to-peer ridesharing services for rides home—this is an increase from 40% in the 2014 program year
- Almost 10% of respondents have interest in using bike sharing as a reimbursable option
- North County employers account for 71% of all participants enrolled in the GRH program
- 56% of participants commute from outside Alameda County
- The average trip distance among taxi and rental car reimbursement requests was 41 miles
- \$1,539 was spent to reimburse approved rides in 2015

Figure 1-1 Summary of Program Impacts

| Category | 2015 Statistics |
|---|-----------------|
| Program enrollment at end of program year | 2,649 |
| Drive-alone roundtrips reduced (per week) | 1,251 |
| Drive-alone one-way trips reduced (per week) | 2,502 |
| Drive-alone roundtrips reduced (per weekday) | 250 |
| Drive-alone one-way trips reduced (per weekday) | 500 |
| Total drive-alone roundtrips reduced per year (52 weeks) | 65,056 |
| Total drive-alone one-way trips reduced per year (52 weeks) | 130,112 |
| Guaranteed Rides Home reimbursed in 2015 | 30 |
| Average commute distance of GRH participants in 2015 | 27 |
| Average miles saved (per workday) | 13,512 |
| Annual miles saved (250 days) | 3,377,917 |
| Average U.S. fuel economy (miles per gallon)* | 23.2 |
| Average gallons of gas saved (per workday) | 582 |
| Annual gallons of gas saved (250 days) | 145,600 |
| Average gas price in 2015 (California)** | \$3.17 |
| Average dollars not spent on gas (per workday) | \$1,846 |
| Annual dollars not spent on gas (250 days) | \$461,552 |

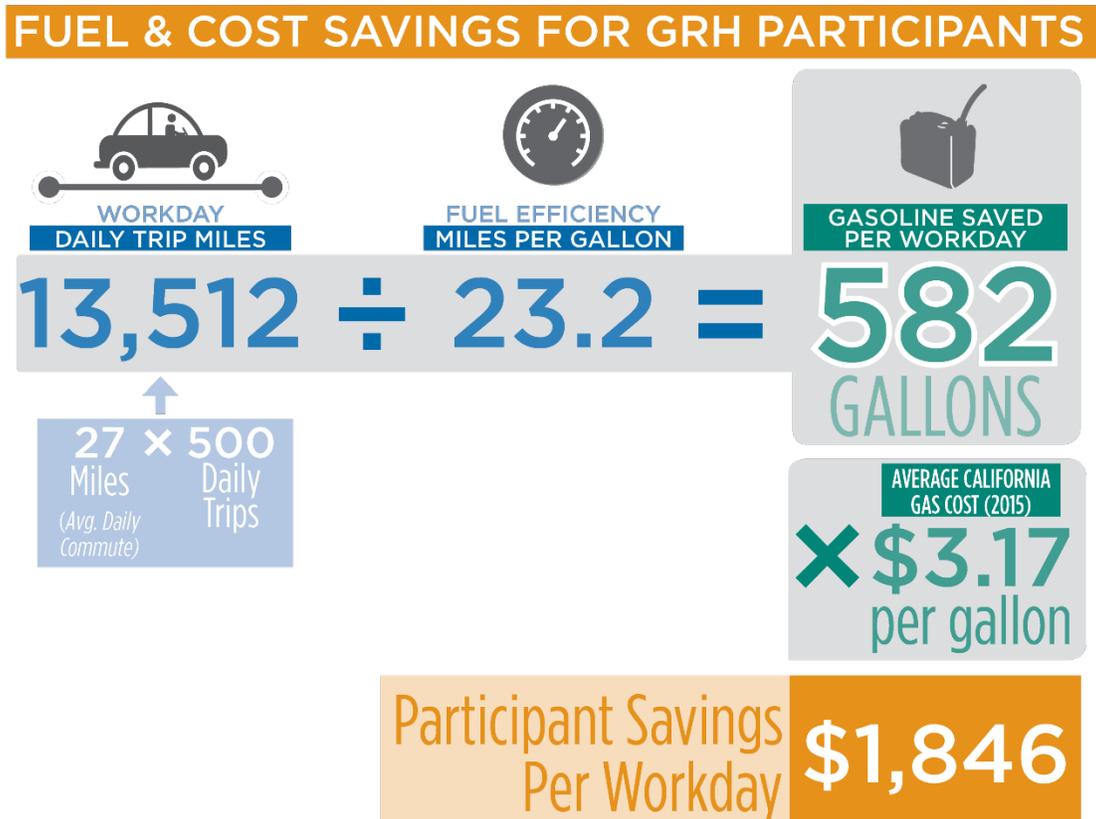
*Average fuel economy source: http://www.rita.dot.gov/bts/sites/rita.dot.gov/bts/files/publications/national_transportation_statistics/html/table_04_23.html

** Average gas price source: http://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/pet_pri_gnd_dcus_sca_a.htm

This analysis is based primarily on two data sources. The first is the GRH Program’s database, which tracks the registration of all program participants as well as the number of Guaranteed Rides Home that have been requested and reimbursed over the calendar year. The second data source is the annual GRH evaluation survey, which asks participants to estimate the number of days per week they commute by driving alone, both before and after joining the GRH Program.

Of the program’s 2,649 enrolled participants as of December 31, 2015, 457 responded to the evaluation survey. To estimate the full scope of GRH program benefits, we applied the distribution of commute behaviors reported by respondents to the total number of program participants. Thus, if 50% of respondents indicated that they drove alone three times per week before joining the program, then we assume 1,324 (50% x 2,649) participants behaved similarly. Once we understand overall participant behavior both before and after joining the program, we calculate total drive-alone roundtrips reduced by a simple subtraction (total drive-alone trips after joining the program minus total drive-alone trips before joining the program).

Figure 1-2 Fuel and Cost Savings



To calculate fuel and cost savings, the average commute distance (as reported by survey respondents) was divided by the U.S. DOT's average fuel efficiency rate¹ to calculate the total gallons of gasoline saved. This was then multiplied by the average cost of gasoline² to estimate participants' financial savings associated with joining the program.

Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2016/2017

- 1. Begin reimbursing rides taken with transportation network companies and public transit.** Participants' desire for increased flexibility in transportation options reimbursable under the GRH program is strong and growing. In 2013, 23% of survey respondents were interested in being reimbursed for TNC ride services. In 2015, that number grew to 57%. To keep up with the rapidly changing transportation options available to participants, the Alameda CTC should work with program staff to develop GRH policies that accommodate such services.
- 2. Monitor use of reimbursement payment options to keep pace with new and emerging technologies.** Much like transportation options, technological advancements lead to new and ever-evolving payment options available for participants seeking reimbursement. GRH and Alameda CTC staff should monitor these new and existing payment options to ensure that GRH remains easy and accessible for all of its participants.
- 3. Provide a list of companies eligible for GRH reimbursement (taxis, TNCs, car share companies, rental car companies, and public transit agencies).** While the GRH program currently provides a list of general transportation services eligible for reimbursement through the program, the growing number of transportation services available to participants begs a more specific list of companies that participants can contact when in need of a ride home. This list would include local taxi, car share, transit services, TNCs, and rental cars available to participants. Though not an exhaustive list—due to the county's size and diversity—it would serve as a quick reference resource for participants. It could be communicated through both the program's website and set of guidelines, and would be updated on a quarterly basis.
- 4. Send quarterly or semiannual GRH update communications.** Due to the feedback received during this year's evaluation that many registered participants' awareness of the program wanes throughout the year and between annual survey announcements, we recommend sending a quarterly newsletter to GRH participants. This newsletter would serve multiple purposes, including informing participants of recent changes to the program, reiterating particular facets of the service such as its PayPal reimbursement option, and generally reminding participants that the service remains available to them.
- 5. Monitor and evaluate the use of new reimbursable rides as these options become available (TNCs, public transit, and car share).** As the GRH program begins to allow reimbursement for new modes of transportation under its guidelines, program staff should monitor and evaluate these ride options to ensure they are being appropriately used and continue to serve GRH participants as intended.

¹ 2015 average fuel efficiency in miles per gallon, based on performance of U.S. light duty vehicles, including passenger cars, light trucks, vans, and sport utility vehicles with a wheelbase equal to or less than 121 inches, as classified by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

² Annual retail regular gasoline prices (as opposed to mid-grade or premium) in California as reported by the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

2 INTRODUCTION

Alameda County's Guaranteed Ride Home Program

Since 1998, the Alameda County Transportation Commission's (Alameda CTC) Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program has provided a free ride home in cases of unexpected personal emergencies for all employees who work in Alameda County. All registered employees are eligible for this benefit on days they use an alternative mode of transportation to get to work. To receive the benefit, participants must have pre-registered and submit their taxi, rental car, or car share receipt along with details of their trip through the GRH website for reimbursement.

GRH is a transportation demand management (TDM) strategy of the overall congestion management program. Specifically, it removes a commonly cited barrier to moving away from commuting by single-occupant vehicle (SOV), which is the need to get home quickly and independently due to an unexpected emergency or circumstance. Such circumstances may include a personal or family illness, unscheduled overtime, or a carpool vehicle breakdown. Funds for this program are provided by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's Transportation Fund for Clean Air in cooperation with the Alameda CTC.

Program Goals

The goal of the GRH program is to reduce traffic and improve air quality in the Bay Area by encouraging commuters to commute using a method other than driving alone. The program supports the goals of Alameda County's Countywide Transportation Plan (CTP), which is the county's long-range plan, and the Congestion Management Program (CMP), which is the county's short-range plan that supports the implementation of the CTP. The CTP is being updated in 2016, and reflects coordination within fifteen local jurisdictions, six transit operators, and community and agency stakeholders across the county. Figure 2-1 highlights goals in the draft 2016 CTP, and how GRH supports these goals.

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Figure 2-1 Alameda County Goals Supported by GRH

| The Alameda County transportation system will be: | GRH Contribution |
|--|--|
| Accessible, affordable, and equitable for people of all ages, incomes, abilities and geographies | By reducing barriers to alternative modes of transportation, the GRH program helps provide better access to lower cost options of the transportation system. |
| Multimodal | By promoting and incentivizing walking, biking, transit, vanpools, and carpools, the GRH program helps balance the county's mode split. |
| Cost effective | In comparison to the cost of building infrastructure, the GRH program focuses on the more efficient use of existing resources and is cost effective at reducing SOV trips. |
| Reliable and efficient | GRH provides peace of mind to participants who regularly commute by walking, biking, transit, vanpools, or carpools. |
| Supportive of a healthy and clean environment | By reducing single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips and replacing them with alternative modes of transportation, the GRH program focuses its resources directly on reducing vehicle emissions and supporting a cleaner environment. |

Administration, Program Eligibility, and Enrollment

The GRH program administrator manages all day-to-day operations, answers daily emails and phone calls from participants, makes vendor payment, maintains and updates the program website, assists in program outreach and marketing, and provides other program assistance as needed.

The program administrator ensures all participants and covered rides home meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Participant must be employed full- or part-time within Alameda County and be at least 18 years of age
- Participant must have used one of the following commute modes on the day of the ride home:
 - Public transportation including BART, AC Transit, ACE, Wheels, Union City Transit, ferry, and Amtrak
 - Employer-provided shuttle or vanpool
 - Carpool or vanpool
 - Walk
 - Bicycle
- Ride home expenses due to one of the following circumstances on the same day as the ride home will be covered only if:
 - Participant or an immediate family member suffers an illness, injury, or severe crisis
 - Participant is asked by supervisor to work unscheduled overtime, which causes participant to miss planned ride home; supervisor verification will be required as part of reimbursement request
 - Participant ridesharing vehicle breaks down or the driver has to leave early or late

- Participant has a break-in, flood, or fire at residence
- Participant’s commute bicycle breaks down on the way to or from work and cannot be repaired at participant’s work site

Marketing and Information

The GRH program is promoted through several channels including email, social media (Facebook and Twitter), employer transportation fairs, community publications, at Alameda CTC outreach events, and via the GRH website. Occasionally, special outreach is conducted to ensure new or large employers begin or maintain active participation.

On an ongoing basis, the program offers two main customer service channels: the Hotline phone number and the GRH email address. The GRH Hotline is available between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. GRH staff members also answer emails within 24 to 48 hours. When a participant registers or submits a request for reimbursement through the website, they receive an automated email about what to expect next. Participants can also update their account information via the GRH website.

2015 Program Changes

In 2015, the GRH program expanded its list of eligible reimbursements to guaranteed rides home using car sharing services such as Zipcar and City Carshare. The GRH program has offered reimbursement via PayPal since 2014, in addition to traditional mailed checks, and saw an increase in participant usage of PayPal in 2015.

Guaranteed Ride Home Program Administrators are cognizant of the rise in availability of dynamic carpooling apps, such as Scoop, Carma, HopIn, or SPLT. Commuters who use apps like these for their commutes are carpoolers, and as such, are eligible to use the program under the same conditions and requirements as other participants—namely, that participants’ reasons for seeking reimbursement are covered in the program’s qualified situations (e.g. personal crisis, family member illness, or unscheduled overtime). The program does not reimburse these participants when the carpooling app fails to match riders with a trip home. Five reimbursements made in 2015 came from participants who used a dynamic carpooling app for their regular commute.

Annual Evaluation

This report presents the results of the eighteenth annual GRH program evaluation. The purpose of this evaluation is to demonstrate the impact that the program has on single-occupancy vehicle use and its associated greenhouse gas emissions effects. The evaluation also reviews participant feedback on the effectiveness of program administration, statistics on employer and employee registration and trips taken, program impact on mode choice, and progress toward countywide goals.

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3 METHODOLOGY

Data is gathered from two primary sources in order to evaluate the GRH program. First, the program’s participant registration database contains information on participants’ typical commutes and distance between work and home. To supplement this information, an online survey was open to participants in March; responses provide further detail on the effect of the program on participants’ commutes over time.

Annual Survey

Between Thursday, March 10, 2016 and Friday, March 25, 2016, registered participants were asked to respond to an online survey covering their perceptions of the program and commute behaviors before and after their registration. The information provided in this survey is the primary means by which this report evaluates the ability of the GRH program to reduce vehicle miles traveled and associated greenhouse gas emissions.

The survey was divided into four sections:

- Program Usage
- Program Information (Communications)
- Program Administration
- Participant Information

Online Database

The GRH program uses an online database powered by Zoho software to track participant, employer, and reimbursement information. The table below shows the information stored in each database.

Figure 3-1 Zoho Database Information

| Participants | Employers | Reimbursements |
|--|--|----------------------------------|
| Name | Contact information (name, email, mailing address, phone number) | Commute mode on day of ride home |
| Contact information (mailing address, email, phone number) | Number of employees on site | Reason for ride home |
| Typical commute mode | | Date of ride home |
| Approximate home-to-work distance | | Reimbursement request amount |
| How they heard about GRH | | Copy of receipt |
| | | Approximate distance |

Each time a new participant submits a registration, his or her information is added to the participant database. If the participant is employed by an employer not already catalogued, they are asked to provide the basic details of their employer (including a contact person), which is

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added to the employer database. Lastly, when participants use the benefit by taking an eligible taxi or rental car trip home, they submit a reimbursement request through the website. This creates an entry into the reimbursement database and alerts program administrators to the request.

In 2015, the reimbursement form was change to add specificity regarding the usage of new dynamic carpooling services, which differ from traditional ride-matching boards and casual carpool in that they match drivers and riders in near-real time via a mobile application. These dynamic carpooling services themselves differ from Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), such as Uber and Lyft, in that drivers using the platform do not profit from their trips; they are only paid mileage reimbursement, which is established by the Internal Revenue Service to accurately reflect the costs of driving. Given the rise of new carpooling options, program administrators are interested in understanding the potential impacts of these new mobility options on the volume of reimbursement requests received.

4 DATA AND ANALYSIS

PARTICIPANT SURVEY DATA

Employee Survey Summary

On March 10, 2016, an email was sent to all employees enrolled in the program asking them to complete an annual evaluation survey. There are two main objectives of the survey:

- To solicit participants' opinions about the quality of GRH customer service
- To determine how the program impacts their transportation mode choices

Survey responses were collected electronically through SurveyMonkey, an online survey service. Participants were informed that they could also complete the survey by phone or email by contacting the GRH Hotline. The perspectives heard in the survey responses supplement feedback gathered throughout from participants' email and phone contact.

Between March 10 and March 20, 2016, 457 responses were received for the 2015 program year (a decrease of approximately 12% from last year). At the time of the survey, there were 2,649 registered participants for **a survey response rate of 17%**.

It should be noted that the number of respondents (457) who took the survey is more than 15 times the number of GRH enrollees who took a ride in 2015 (30). This corroborates a finding from the survey that almost 90% of respondents report never having had occasion to take a guaranteed ride home since enrollment; 96% reported they had not taken a guaranteed ride home in 2015. Therefore, opinions regarding the program, described in the following sections, are not necessarily shaped by personal experience with using the benefit.

Program Usage

The purpose of this section is to gauge the impact of the GRH program on reducing drive-alone trips, based on survey responses. Program effectiveness is measured by assessing participants' reported change in commute behavior before and after enrolling in the GRH program.

Using the data gathered on participants' commute modes, an estimate can be generated for the total number of weekly drive-alone trips replaced by the use of other modes for those enrolled in GRH. The data from the survey were used to calculate the percentage of respondents that never drove alone, or drove alone one, two, three, four, or five days per week both *before* joining the program and *during* the 2015 evaluation period. These percentages were applied to the overall set of active participants (2,649) to calculate the effect of the GRH program, which is just one of the Alameda CTC's suite of commute programs that addresses participants' drive-alone commuting frequency.

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Figure 4-1 illustrates the results of this analysis using the methodology described above. Among the 2,649 active participants in 2015, **1,251 fewer drive-alone roundtrip commutes (or 2,502 one-way trips) were taken each week in 2015.** This is equivalent to a reduction of 130,112 total drive-alone, one-way trips per year.³

³ This is based on the program enrollment as of December 2015 and 52 weeks per year.

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Figure 4-1 Total Weekly Drive-Along Trips Before and After Joining GRH

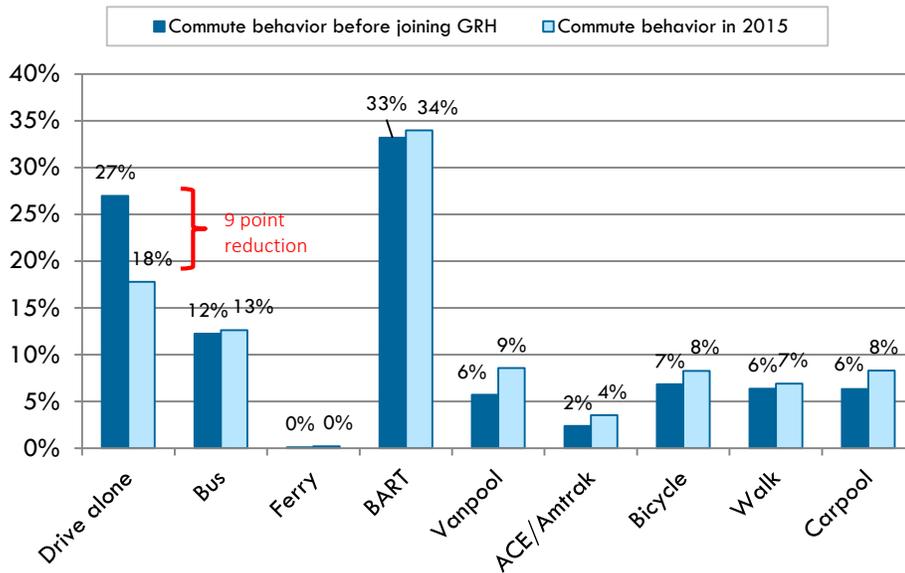
| Frequency | Before Joining Program | | | After Joining Program (2014 commute behavior) | | | Roundtrip Increase or Decrease (weekly) |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| | Percentage of Respondents | Number of People ¹ | Total Drive-Along Roundtrips (weekly) | Percentage of Respondents | Number of People ¹ | Total Drive-Along Roundtrips (weekly) | |
| Never drive alone to work | 57% | 1,515 | 0 | 63% | 1,682 | 0 | 0 |
| Drive alone 1 day per week | 8% | 211 | 211 | 11% | 281 | 281 | 71 |
| Drive alone 2 days per week | 5% | 129 | 257 | 7% | 193 | 387 | 130 |
| Drive alone 3 days per week | 4% | 117 | 351 | 5% | 129 | 387 | 36 |
| Drive alone 4 days per week | 6% | 164 | 655 | 3% | 76 | 305 | -350 |
| Drive alone 5 days per week | 19% | 515 | 2,573 | 11% | 287 | 1,436 | -1,137 |
| Total | 100% | 2,649 | 7,171 | 100% | 2,649 | 2,796 | -1,251 |

¹ Extrapolation of percentages of respondents to the total program enrollment of 2,649 (total enrollment as of December 31, 2015)

Commute Behavior

The reduction in annual drive-alone trips corresponds to an increase in the use of the other modes that the GRH program is designed to support. Participants active in 2015 reported a shift in commute mode before and after joining the program. Ridesharing (in the form of carpooling and vanpooling) absorbs more than half of the shift away from driving alone (representing five percentage points of the nine percent who shifted away from driving). Figure 4-2 illustrates the change in participants' commute modes as exemplified by the estimated annual round trips.

Figure 4-2 Before and After Weekly Mode Split



Not only has the program shifted participants to other modes, it has reduced the number of days each individual participant commutes by driving alone. **Further, survey responses indicate that most of the shift away from driving alone four or five days per week is toward driving one or two days or to not driving at all—suggesting that GRH enables participants not only to shift their behavior, but also to shift it significantly.** In fact, the number of respondents who drive four or five days a week decreased from 25% before signing up for the program to 14% after signing up. See Figure 4-3.

Three final points of data collected regarding participants' commutes cover home-to-work distance, program usage, and participants' likelihood of changing modes had the GRH program not existed.

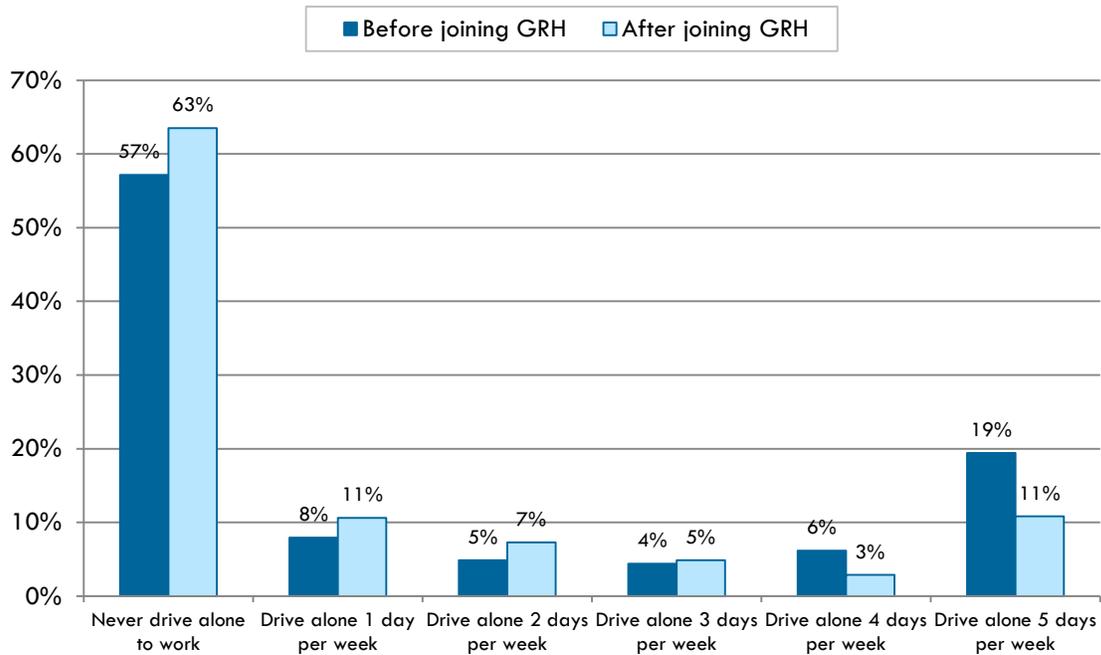
- **The average home-to-work distance among respondents is approximately 27 miles.** This one-way trip distance ranges between 1 and 100 miles among respondents.⁴
- **In 2015, only 3.7% of participants took a ride using the GRH benefit.** This is slightly higher than for 2014 (3.1%), suggesting an increased usability of the program.

⁴ Note: this is a similar average and range to what is found in the program's full participant database (average 27 miles; range 1 to 129 miles), suggesting that survey respondents are representative of overall program participation in this regard of their commute.

Around 11% of respondents had used the program since they joined (slightly more than in 2014).

- Seventy-one percent of respondents would continue this commute behavior even without the GRH program benefit; 20% would increase the days per week when they drive alone; and 9% would begin driving alone every day. This response suggests that **the GRH program significantly reduces single-occupancy vehicle use among almost 30% of participants**. This portion represents a slightly lower percentage than the 2014 survey response.

Figure 4-3 Propensity of Driving Alone Among GRH Participants



Program Information

A little less than half of program participants (43%) report that they did not look for additional program information after registering with the program. The participants that did look for additional program information relied primarily on the GRH website and their employer representative for this information. It should be noted that only around 1% of respondents visited the GRH Facebook or Twitter pages to find more information; less than 3% used the GRH Hotline.

Though most people did not request additional program information, almost 90% of those who did found that the clarity of information in published brochures and on the website to be either good or excellent. The same is true for the response time and information received through the GRH Hotline.

Lastly, **the vast majority of participants heard about the program through employer-led communications**. About one-third heard about the program during benefits enrollment; one third from their employer during other times; and 18% from their coworker.

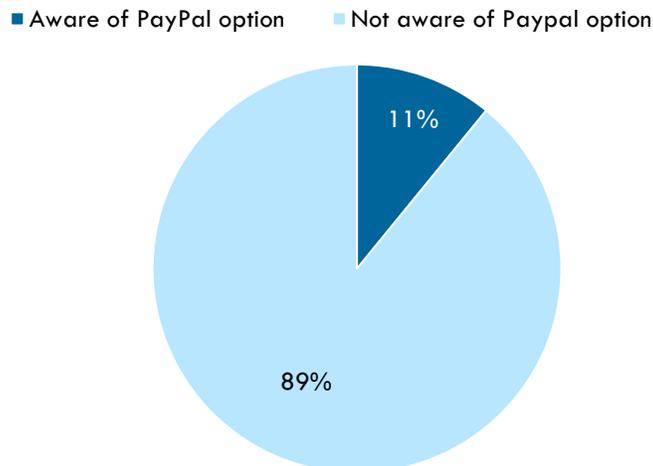
Program Administration

A third section of the survey asked participants for their opinions of program administration. Questions covered the usability of the website, awareness of reimbursement options, awareness of the program's Facebook page, interest in expanding the policy on the types of transportation that can be reimbursed, and an open-response question asking for general feedback on their experiences with the program.

Website usability. As noted previously, most participants have not utilized the GRH program benefit directly. Of those who indicated they had used website functionality such as online registration, reimbursement requests, or account updates, almost half indicated that the usability of these functions is excellent and an additional 43% indicated that usability is good, totaling 92% of all respondents who used the GRH program's online functions.

Reimbursement administration. Since 2014, participants have been given the option of receiving reimbursement checks in the mail or by online payment service PayPal. In 2015, only three of the 30 processed reimbursements (10%) were made through PayPal. This reflects the 11% of participants the report being aware of this service

Figure 4-4 Participant Awareness of PayPal Reimbursement Option

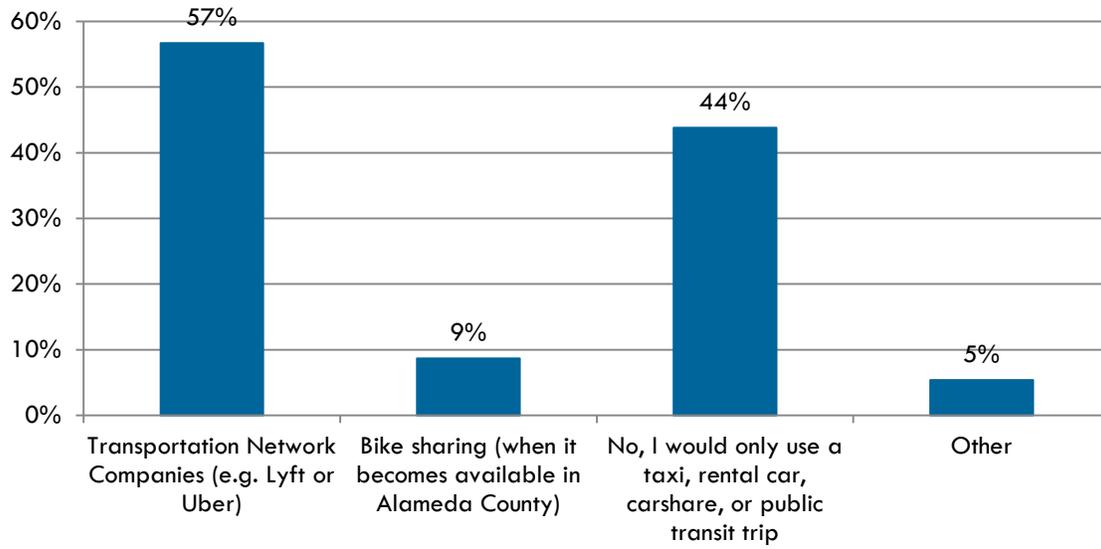


Social media. Though just 1% of respondents indicated using the GRH Facebook page for obtaining information about the program, more than 8% reported being aware of it. This suggests that the Facebook page may be best used to promote awareness of the program, but that other channels should be used to provide specific information about program eligibility and usage.

Reimbursable rides home. In early 2015, the Alameda County Guaranteed Ride Home began approving reimbursement requests for rides home taken through car sharing services Zipcar and City Carshare, though no such requests were received in 2015. Program staff has noticed an increasing number of inquiries related to reimbursing Transportation Network Companies (TNCs, such as Lyft and Uber), so participants were asked to report their interest in using this option for rides home, as well their interest in a bike sharing option. **Fifty seven percent of respondents are interested in being able to use peer-to-peer ridesharing services for**

rides home—this is an increase from 40% in the 2014 program year and up from 23% in 2013—reflecting the growing use of TNCs among the general public. Additionally, **almost 10% of respondents have interest in using bike share as a reimbursable option**; Bay Area Bike Share will expand to the East Bay in 2016.

Figure 4-5 Participant Preference for Additional Ride Home Options



General feedback. Lastly, participants were asked to provide program staff with general comments and feedback on the program, its administration, and any other topics they would like staff to know about. The feedback received is overwhelmingly positive. Below is a selection of both positive and negative feedback. Negative feedback and suggestions through this process are taken seriously and suggestions for ways to address them are included in the recommendations chapter.

Select positive feedback:

- “I feel confident taking a vanpool knowing GRH is backing me if I need help.”
- “The program provides reassurance that I don't have to use my car to commute the entire distance to the office (I drive to the nearest BART station and then use that). Thank you for maintaining it.”
- “Definitely gives me peace of mind- and a solid backup plan- if my main commute method falls through.”
- “I like knowing that if I have an emergency and need to get home, I will always have a reliable means to get there.”
- “I am a committed bicycle commuter. Though I have not had to use GRH, I like

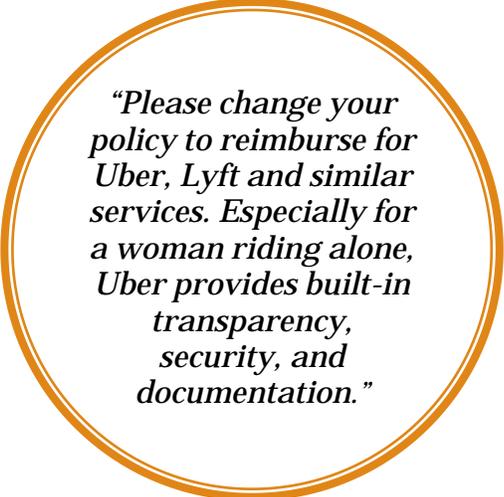
“Knowing I can get home quickly in an emergency allows me to feel comfortable walking to work rather than taking my car.”

having it available for those just-in-case occasions. I value that it is there.”

- “Knowing there is an option when there is an emergency makes it a lot easier to participate in a carpool.”
- “I have never used it in the 17 years I have been part of the program, yet still feel it will be a great service if I ever need it.”
- “A great safety net.”
- “Alleviates concerns of needing to get home, to a hospital, etc. in an emergency situation where time and directions is important. This allows me to feel confident that commuting via bus-to-BART to work is a reliable option vs. needing to drive in for that same confidence.”

Select negative feedback and suggestions:

- “After hearing about GRH, I was really glad to have a plan in the case of an emergency. I took a cab ride through Uber to get home when I got sick at work. I was later told that Uber or Lyft rides would not be eligible for a GRH reimbursement. I was disappointed because these cab rides are much more cost efficient, convenient, and helpful during emergencies.”
- “Ability to use TNCs would greatly expand the ease of use and marketability of guaranteed ride home programs to employees who are unaware or unwilling to use the service or other taxi options in the East Bay.”
- “It's 2016. Please change your policy to reimburse for Uber, Lyft and similar services. Especially for a woman riding alone, Uber provides built-in transparency, security, and documentation. Traditional taxicabs in uptown Oakland are reluctant to give receipts or accept credit cards.”
- “Give a better time frame of how long it will take to be reimbursed.”
- “An app for iPhones where we can call the hotline electronically without using the phone. This makes it more accessible for deaf people and easier for some people when we're sick.”
- “Advertise more - most folks on my vanpool are not aware of the service.”
- “Quarterly reminders of how to use the program, its advantages, and updates” would be helpful.



“Please change your policy to reimburse for Uber, Lyft and similar services. Especially for a woman riding alone, Uber provides built-in transparency, security, and documentation.”

Respondents' Characteristics

Responses were received from employees of over 200 companies. Only 2% of respondents had changed jobs to another employer in Alameda County in the last year, suggesting that information in the participant database remains up to date for at least one year.

OVERALL EMPLOYEE AND EMPLOYER PARTICIPATION

Statistics presented in this section represent the full set of program participants from January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015. This data was collected through participant registration and, unlike the annual survey, represents the full sample of participants.

Employee Participation

As of December 31, 2015, there were 2,649 participants had registered for GRH. Participation in the program increased by 18% over the year – as of December 31 2014, there were 2,179 participants registered for the program.

Figure 4-6 summarizes how these participants are spread across Alameda County’s four planning areas:

- North County, encompassing the cities of Alameda, Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Oakland, and Piedmont
- Central County, encompassing the cities of Hayward and San Leandro and the unincorporated communities of Ashland, Castro Valley, Cherryland, and San Lorenzo
- South County, encompassing the cities of Fremont, Newark, and Union City
- East County beyond the East Bay hills, including the cities of Dublin, Livermore, and Pleasanton, and the unincorporated communities of Sunol and other smaller communities in the East Bay hills

Figure 4-6 Participants by Planning Area⁵

| Planning Area | Number of Participants | % |
|----------------|------------------------|-----|
| Central County | 122 | 5% |
| East County | 494 | 19% |
| North County | 1,886 | 71% |
| South County | 96 | 4% |

North County accounts for 73% of all participants enrolled in the GRH program.

North County includes the two busiest employment hubs in Alameda County—Downtown Oakland and the University of California at Berkeley.⁶ North County also has high coverage of rail and high-frequency bus lines and, compared to other planning areas, an urban form that favors walking and biking. East County has the lowest population density in Alameda County and the highest concentration of protected agricultural land. It is served by the Dublin/Pleasanton BART and West Dublin/Pleasanton BART stations and 19% of participants work in East County. Central County and South County each have 5% or less of GRH participation. Although they are well-served by BART, AC Transit, and other commuter options such as Amtrak, few large employers are located in these areas.

We can also look at participation by employer. The following data (Figure 4-7) represent the top 10 employer sites in terms of program registrants as of December 31, 2015. It should be noted that these are employer *sites* (e.g. staff of Alameda County *Social Services*) and not employers overall; participation by the employer overall (e.g. staff of Alameda County) may be larger than what is shown in Figure 4-7.

⁵ Note: 51 participants (representing 2% of registrants) in the database reported employers outside of Alameda County, so they are not reflected in this table.

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau Longitudinal Employment-Household Dynamics On the Map Tool

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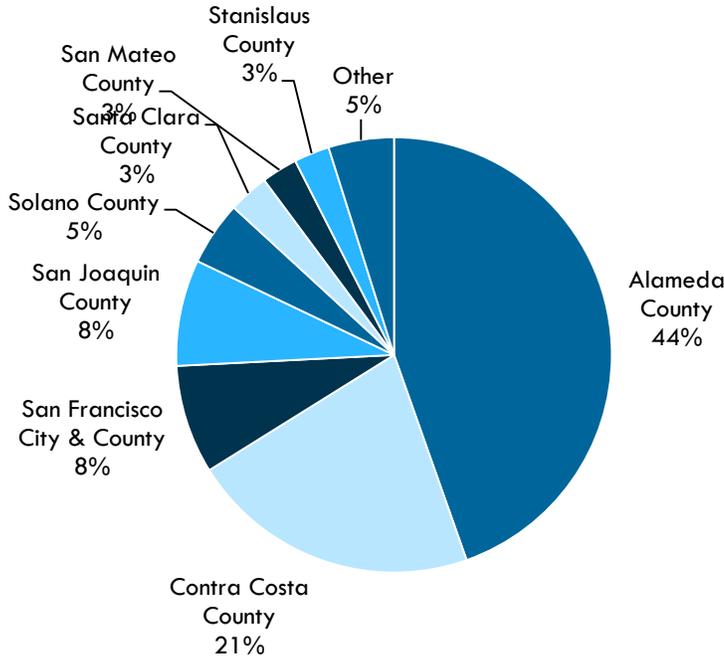
Figure 4-7 Participants by Employer Site (Top 10)

| | Employer Site | Planning Area | Participants |
|----|--|---------------|--------------|
| 1 | Kaiser Permanente Oakland Regional Offices, 1800 Harrison Street, 6th Floor, Oakland | North County | 169 |
| 2 | Lawrence Livermore National Security, P.O. Box 808 East Avenue, L-695, Livermore | East County | 98 |
| 3 | Kaiser Oakland Medical Center, 280 W. MacArthur Blvd., Commuter Services, Oakland | North County | 82 |
| 4 | Alameda County, 1405 Lakeside Drive, Oakland | North County | 80 |
| 5 | City of Oakland, Personnel; 150 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, 3rd Floor, Oakland | North County | 75 |
| 6 | Safeway Inc., 5918 Stoneridge Mall Road, Pleasanton | East County | 59 |
| 7 | Kaiser Permanente Regional Offices, 1950 Franklin Street, Oakland | North County | 57 |
| 7 | Lawrence Livermore National Security, LLC, 7000 East Avenue, Livermore | East County | 57 |
| 7 | U.S. Coast Guard, Various locations, Oakland/Alameda | North County | 57 |
| 10 | Alameda County Public Health, 1000 Broadway Suite 500, Oakland | North County | 56 |

While the GRH program is designed to serve people who work in Alameda County, participants' home locations span several Bay Area counties and beyond. The vast majority of participants (66%) live in either Alameda (44%) or Contra Costa (22%) counties. Eight percent commute from San Francisco or San Joaquin County, 5% from Solano, and less than 5% from each of the other counties. **With 56% of commuters coming from outside the county, the program has a high potential for reducing vehicle miles traveled and its associated greenhouse gas emissions.**

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Figure 4-8 Participants by County of Residence (through 2015)



Other includes: Marin County, Sacramento County, Napa County, Sonoma County, Yolo County, and other counties that account for 2% or less of total participation.

To further represent commute patterns, Figure 4-9 illustrates the top five origin/destination pairs among participants' commute trips. The most common commute among participants is within Oakland and the most common destination (work location) overall is also Oakland. Even though only 8% of participants reside in San Francisco County, San Francisco-to-Oakland is the second most common commute trip. Participants whose usual commute trip coincides with these top five origin/destination pairs rely heavily on public transit as their primary commute mode. This reflects the availability of high-frequency/high-capacity transit in these areas. The top five home-to-work commute trip pairs in 2015 are the same as in 2014.

Figure 4-9 Top Five Home-to-Work Commute Trips Among Participants

| Commute Origin-Destination Pair | Primary Commute Mode | Participants |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Oakland–Oakland | Transit | 109 |
| | Bike | 54 |
| | Carpool | 32 |
| | Walk | 24 |
| | Oakland–Oakland Total | 219 |
| San Francisco–Oakland | Transit | 105 |
| | Bike | 2 |
| | Carpool | 2 |
| | Vanpool | 1 |
| | San Francisco–Oakland Total | 110 |
| Hayward–Oakland | Transit | 69 |
| | Carpool | 12 |
| | Hayward–Oakland Total | 81 |
| Berkeley–Oakland | Transit | 49 |
| | Bike | 22 |
| | Carpool | 3 |
| | Berkeley–Oakland Total | 74 |
| Fremont–Oakland | Transit | 49 |
| | Vanpool | 4 |
| | Carpool | 3 |
| | Fremont–Oakland Total | 56 |

Employer Participation

As of December 31, 2015, participants from 532 employers had registered. As explained above, the word “employers” here represents employer sites; employers that have multiple sites or departments (such as Kaiser Permanente or Alameda County) are counted separately. The GRH database from 2013 and earlier counted these separate locations as one entity, which could explain some of the growth in employer representation between 2013 (292 employers) and 2015 (532). The difference may also be due partly to the program no longer requiring employers to be registered for participants to sign up; participants from new employers are able to sign up without having to go through their human resources department, and so a broader diversity of employers are likely to be represented.

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Figure 4-10 Employers by Location versus Participants by Location

| Location | Employer Sites (2015) | % of All Employers | Participant Representation |
|----------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| North | 346 | 62% | 71% |
| Alameda | 56 | 10% | |
| Berkeley | 57 | 10% | |
| Emeryville | 40 | 7% | |
| Oakland | 193 | 34% | |
| Central | 34 | 6% | 5% |
| Hayward | 22 | 4% | |
| San Leandro | 12 | 2% | |
| South | 37 | 7% | 4% |
| Fremont | 28 | 5% | |
| Newark | 2 | 0% | |
| Union City | 7 | 1% | |
| East | 104 | 19% | 19% |
| Dublin | 18 | 3% | |
| Livermore | 14 | 3% | |
| Pleasanton | 72 | 13% | |
| Other | 37 | 7% | 2% |

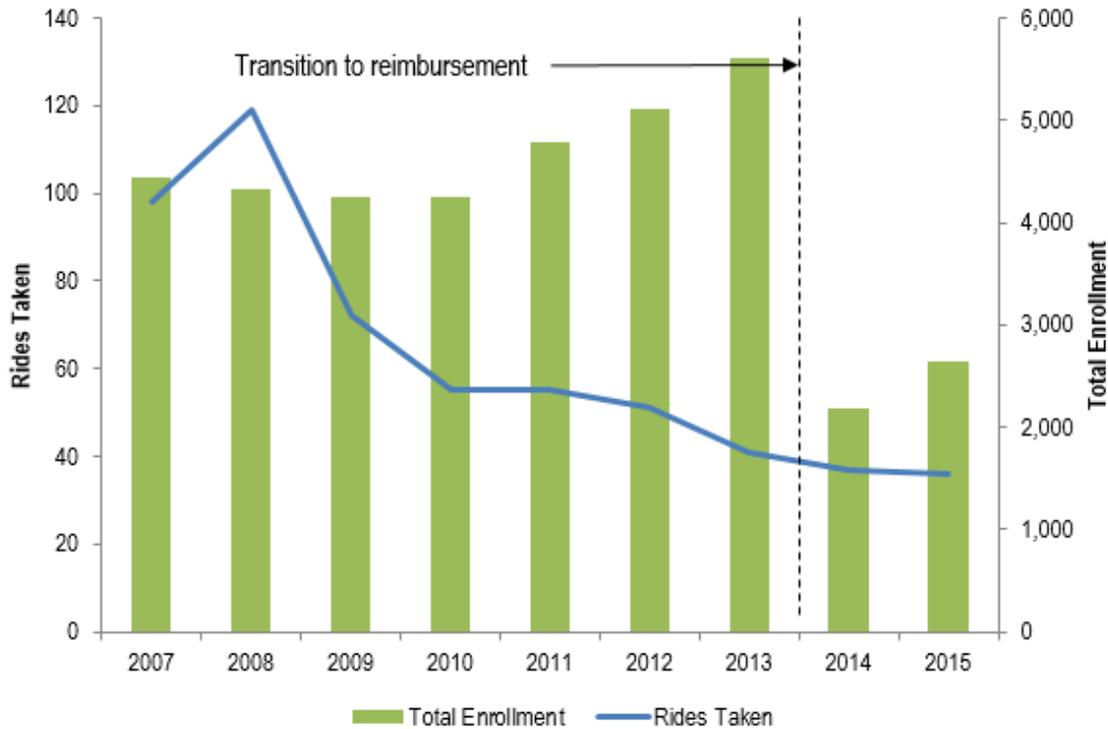
The distribution of GRH-enrolled participants across planning areas is similar to the distribution of employers. A slightly higher percentage of participants work in North County than the percentage of employers located there, which could be an indication of the higher number of large employers in Oakland and Berkeley (i.e. more employees per employer).

Trip Statistics

In 2015, a total of 36 reimbursement requests were received – one less than in 2014, and four fewer trips than had been taken under the voucher program in 2013. This demonstrates that the program continues to provide a cost-effective service as participation grows. Figure 4-11 illustrates the changes in program use over time.

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Figure 4-11 Enrollment vs. Usage over time



Most reimbursement requests were made for taxis (81%). The remainder of requests were made for rental car, with one request for public transit (which was not covered in 2015). While reimbursement by car sharing services such as Zipcar was offered as an option in 2015, no one requested this reimbursement. However, there were two requests for reimbursement by Transportation Network Companies and one request for reimbursement by transit, both of which were not covered in 2015.

Figure 4-12 summarizes the reimbursement requests, costs, and approvals for the 2015 program year. Some requests were denied since they did not follow program guidelines. For example, one request was denied because the employer was not based in Alameda County; another request was denied because the ride was taken with a TNC or public transit—ineligible modes in 2015. In other cases, requests were partially fulfilled – some reimbursement requests included taxi driver gratuity, which is not covered by the program, or other rental car amenities such as roadside assistance, which is also not covered by the program.

Of note among the requests is the fact that **more than 60% of participants requesting reimbursement for a trip home commute primarily by carpool or vanpool**, whereas less than 30% of participants overall report using carpooling or vanpooling for their commute. Therefore, GRH is very helpful for people relying on ridesharing to get to work, which is also more likely to be used in areas where transit service is less frequent.

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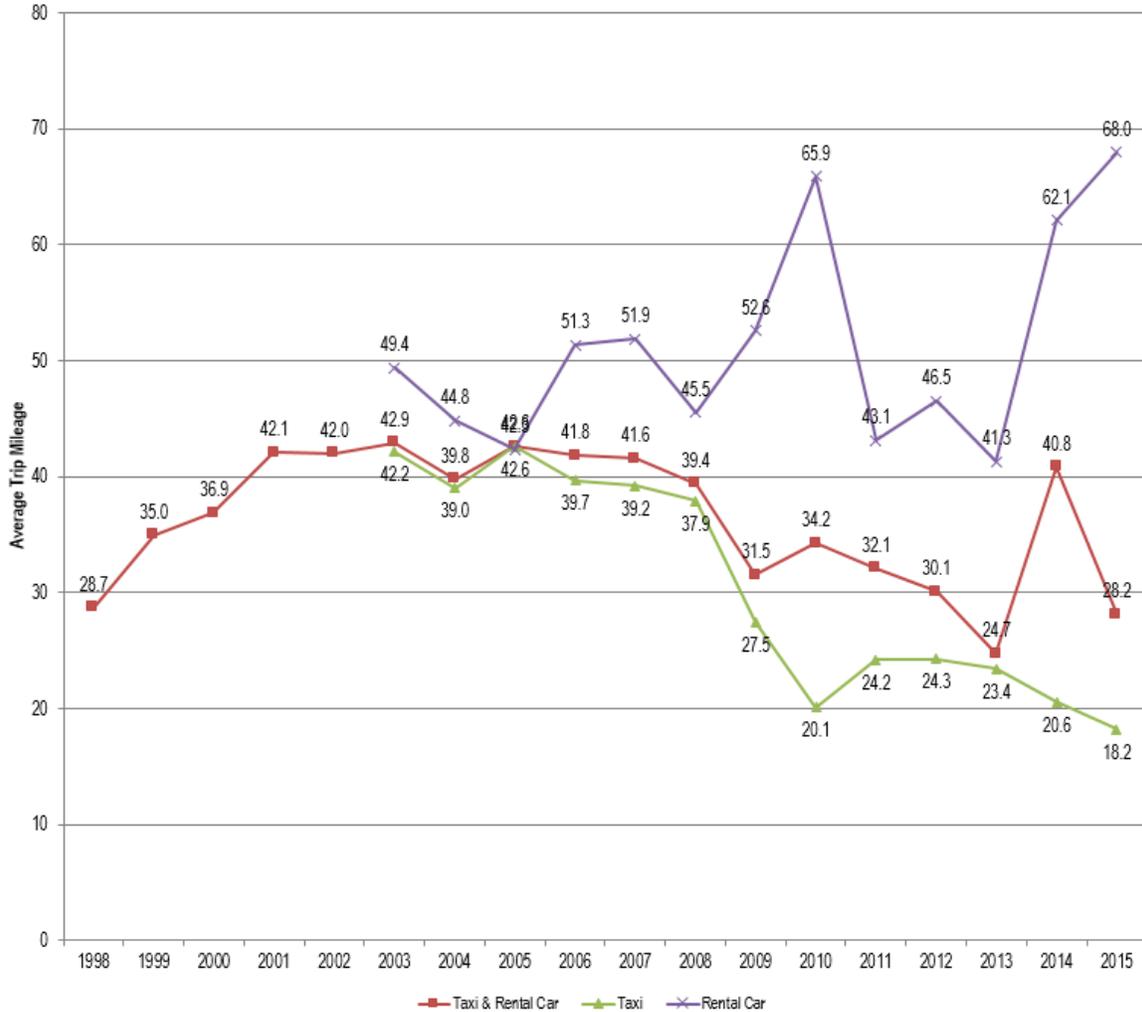
Figure 4-12 2015 Reimbursement Requests

| Method of Ride Home | Requests | Total Reimbursement Request | Total Approved Reimbursement | Average Reimbursement Request | Average Approved Reimbursement |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Rental Car | 6 | \$318.01 | \$313.02 | \$53.00 | \$52.17 |
| Taxi | 29 | \$1,566.61 | \$1,225.85 | \$54.02 | \$43.78 |
| Public Transit | 1 | \$4.90 | \$0.00 | \$4.90 | \$0.00 |
| Total | 36 | \$1,889.52 | \$1,538.87 | \$52.49 | \$45.26 |

Like last year, but unlike years before it, the average trip distance among taxi and rental car reimbursement requests (41 miles) was higher than the average home-to-work distance among participants overall (27 miles—as reported through the annual participant survey). Figure 4-13 illustrates the trend over time. This corroborates the finding that GRH reimbursed trips often cover carpoolers or vanpoolers—modes that likely represent longer average trip distances than those using public transit. While car sharing was offered as an eligible reimbursement in 2015, no reimbursement requests using car sharing options such as Zipcar or City CarShare were used.

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Figure 4-13 Average Trip Distance⁷



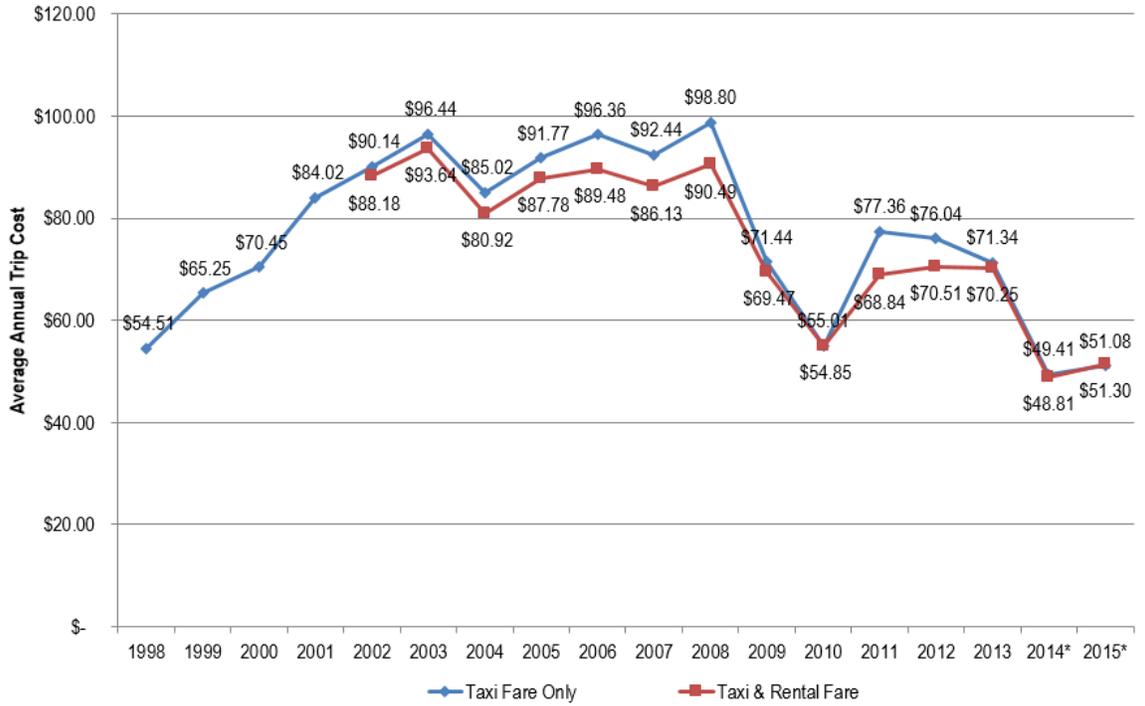
Note: Average trip mileage for rental cars erroneously reported roundtrip distance in the 2014 evaluation. This chart compares each ride home mode's average one-way trip distance.

Last, Figure 4-14 illustrates the average cost per trip over the last 18 program years. **In 2015, the overall average cost per trip increased slightly from 2014, from \$48.81 to \$51.30** (or 5%--not much more than inflation). More notably, the average cost per trip in 2014 and 2015 is a drop from previous years (2011-2013), where overall average cost per trip was around \$75.00. The general decrease reflects participants' increased reliance on rental cars for trips over 20 miles, which costs the program much less than a taxi ride. The shift to a reimbursement model—which requires participants to pay the upfront cost of their ride home—could be encouraging participants to take less costly rides. Further, participants low reliance on the PayPal reimbursement method—which allows them to be reimbursed in a more timely fashion—indicates that paying upfront is not a significant barrier to participation.

⁷ For program years prior to 2013, the trip distance was reported by the taxi driver or rental car company. For 2014 and after, the trip distance was reported by the participant on the reimbursement request form.

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Figure 4-14 Average Trip Cost by Year



*Approved cost

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5 OVERALL PROGRAM IMPACT

The Alameda Guaranteed Ride Home program saved 2,649 participants over \$450,000 in fuel costs throughout 2015. This savings is due to an annual reduction of 3.4 million vehicle miles traveled on Bay Area roads.

Figure 5-1 Summary of Program Impacts

| Category | 2015 Statistics |
|---|-----------------|
| Program enrollment at end of program year | 2,649 |
| Drive-alone roundtrips reduced (per week) | 1,251 |
| Drive-alone one-way trips reduced (per week) | 2,502 |
| Drive-alone roundtrips reduced (per weekday) | 250 |
| Drive-alone one-way trips reduced (per weekday) | 500 |
| Total drive-alone roundtrips reduced per year (52 weeks) | 65,056 |
| Total drive-alone one-way trips reduced per year (52 weeks) | 130,112 |
| Guaranteed Rides Home reimbursed in 2015 | 30 |
| Average commute distance of GRH participants in 2015 | 27 |
| Average miles saved (per workday) | 13,512 |
| Annual miles saved (250 days) | 3,377,917 |
| Average U.S. fuel economy (miles per gallon)* | 23.2 |
| Average gallons of gas saved (per workday) | 582 |
| Annual gallons of gas saved (250 days) | 145,600 |
| Average gas price in 2015 (California)** | \$3.17 |
| Average dollars not spent on gas (per workday) | \$1,846 |
| Annual dollars not spent on gas (250 days) | \$461,552 |

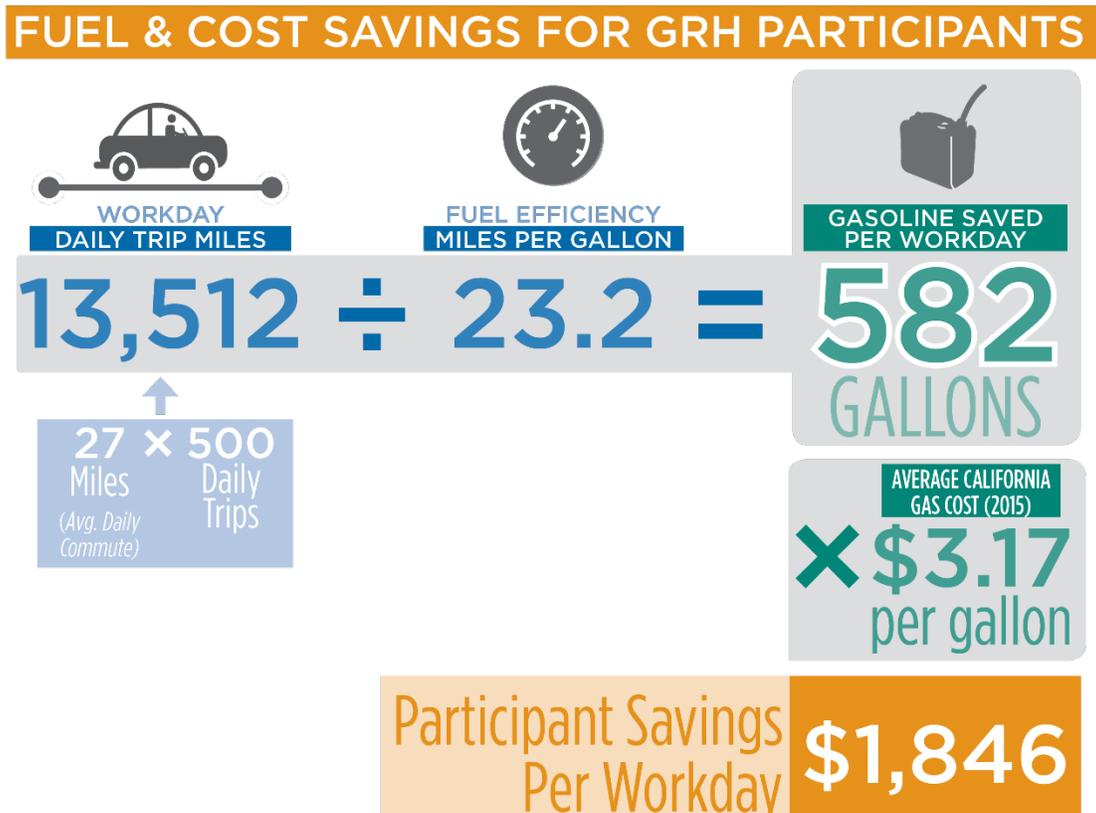
*Average fuel economy source: http://www.rita.dot.gov/bts/sites/rita.dot.gov/bts/files/publications/national_transportation_statistics/html/table_04_23.html

** Average gas price source: http://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/pet_pri_gnd_dcus_sca_a.htm

This analysis is based primarily on two data sources. The first is the GRH Program’s database, which tracks the registration of all program participants as well as the number of Guaranteed Rides Home that have been requested and reimbursed over the calendar year. The second data source is the annual GRH evaluation survey, which asks participants to estimate the number of days per week they commute by driving alone, both before and after joining the GRH Program.

Of the program’s 2,649 enrolled participants as of December 31, 2015, 457 responded to the evaluation survey. To estimate the full scope of GRH program benefits, we applied the distribution of commute behaviors reported by respondents to the total number of program participants. Thus, if 50% of respondents indicated that they drove alone three times per week before joining the program, then we assume 1,324 (50% x 2,649) participants behaved similarly. Once we understand overall participant behavior both before and after joining the program, we calculate total drive-alone roundtrips reduced by a simple subtraction (total drive-alone trips after joining the program minus total drive-alone trips before joining the program).

Figure 5-2 Fuel and Cost Savings



To calculate fuel and cost savings, the average commute distance (as reported by survey respondents) was divided by the U.S. DOT’s average fuel efficiency rate⁸ to calculate the total gallons of gasoline saved. This was then multiplied by the average cost of gasoline⁹ to estimate participants’ financial savings associated with joining the program.

⁸ 2015 average fuel efficiency in miles per gallon, based on performance of U.S. light duty vehicles, including passenger cars, light trucks, vans, and sport utility vehicles with a wheelbase equal to or less than 121 inches, as classified by the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Bureau of Transportation Statistics.

⁹ Annual retail regular gasoline prices (as opposed to mid-grade or premium) in California as reported by the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

2015 Recommendation Status

1. Begin reimbursing rides taken with transportation network companies and on public transportation.

Participants' desire for increased flexibility in transportation options reimbursable under the GRH program is strong and growing. Throughout the 2014 and 2015 program years, staff fielded several phone and email inquiries regarding the use of transportation network companies within program limitations and had to reject three reimbursement requests that had used a TNC to get home in an emergency.

In 2015, GRH program staff worked with Alameda CTC to monitor calls and reimbursement requests pertaining to TNCs and public transit. While neither mode was reimbursable in the 2015 evaluation year, staff continued to monitor the issue. Public transportation was added as a reimbursable mode in early 2016 and TNCs will be added in late spring.

2. Increase strategic outreach and communication to continue growing GRH participation throughout Alameda County.

Participation grew in 2015, but has not reached participation levels before the 2014 program transition. In 2015, marketing efforts were primarily carried out by Alameda CTC staff. GRH program staff supported Alameda CTC in creating marketing materials, such as a redesign of the GRH postcard and a new 11x17 poster available for employers to download from the GRH website.

3. Monitor average trip distance among reimbursed trips.

In 2015, the average trip distance among taxi and rental car reimbursement requests (41 miles) was higher than the average home-to-work distance among participants overall (27 miles—as reported through the annual participant survey). Some of this trend could be explained by program changes such as the way trip information is collected, the promotion of car rental services for trips over 20 miles, and the need for participants to pay upfront the costs of their ride home. However, to ensure program costs are kept low, it would be responsible to monitor increased trip distances over the coming year.

To respond to this recommendation from 2014, average trip distance is now included in monthly reports sent to the Alameda CTC Program Manager; these reports have not yet raised red flags that require additional outreach or other preventative actions.

Recommendations for Fiscal Year 2016/2017

1. **Begin reimbursing rides taken with transportation network companies and public transit.** Participants' desire for increased flexibility in transportation options reimbursable under the GRH program is strong and growing. In 2013, 23% of survey respondents were interested in being reimbursed for TNC ride services. In 2015, that number grew to 57%. To keep up with the rapidly changing transportation options available to participants, the Alameda CTC should work with program staff to develop GRH policies that accommodate such services.
2. **Monitor use of reimbursement payment options to keep pace with new and emerging technologies.** Much like transportation options, technological advancements lead to new and ever-evolving payment options available for participants seeking reimbursement. GRH and Alameda CTC staff should monitor these new and existing payment options to ensure that GRH remains easy and accessible for all of its participants.
3. **Provide a list of companies eligible for GRH reimbursement (taxis, TNCs, car share companies, rental car companies, and public transit agencies).** While the GRH program currently provides a list of general transportation services eligible for reimbursement through the program, the growing number of transportation services available to participants begs a more specific list of companies that participants can contact when in need of a ride home. This list would include local taxi, car share, transit services, TNCs, and rental cars available to participants. Though not an exhaustive list—due to the county's size and diversity—it would serve as a quick reference resource for participants. It could be communicated through both the program's website and set of guidelines, and would be updated on a quarterly basis.
4. **Send quarterly or semiannual GRH update communications.** Due to the feedback received during this year's evaluation that many registered participants' awareness of the program wanes throughout the year and between annual survey announcements, we recommend sending a quarterly newsletter to GRH participants. This newsletter would serve multiple purposes, including informing participants of recent changes to the program, reiterating particular facets of the service such as its PayPal reimbursement option, and generally reminding participants that the service remains available to them.
5. **Monitor and evaluate the use of new reimbursable rides as these options become available (TNCs, public transit, and car share).** As the GRH program begins to allow reimbursement for new modes of transportation under its guidelines, program staff should monitor and evaluate these ride options to ensure they are being appropriately used and continue to serve GRH participants as intended.