

**FY 2016 WORK PROGRAM FOR THE  
COMMUTER CONNECTIONS PROGRAM  
FOR THE GREATER WASHINGTON  
METROPOLITAN REGION**

**March 18, 2015**

**NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD  
METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**



The preparation of this program document was financially aided through grants from the District Department of Transportation; Maryland Department of Transportation; Virginia Department of Transportation; and the U.S. Department of Transportation.

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## **ABSTRACT**

**TITLE:** FY 2016 Work Program for the Commuter Connections Program for the Metropolitan Washington Region

**DATE:** March 18, 2015

**AUTHOR:** Nicholas W. Ramfos, Director, Commuter Connections

**AGENCY:** The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is the regional planning organization of the Washington area's major local governments and their governing officials. COG works toward solutions to problems in such areas as growth, air and water quality, transportation, and housing, and serves as the regional planning organization for Metropolitan Washington.

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region. The TPB plays an important role as the regional forum for transportation planning.

**ABSTRACT:** This document provides information on an alternative commute program for the Metropolitan Washington region called "Commuter Connections." The program is designed to improve traffic congestion and regional air quality by reducing single occupancy vehicle use. Specific program elements include Commuter Operations Center, Regional Guaranteed Ride Home Program, Marketing, Monitoring and Evaluation, Employer Outreach, and GRH Baltimore

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**TPB R18-2015**  
**March 18, 2015**

**NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD**  
**777 North Capitol Street, N.E.**  
**Washington, D.C. 20002**

**RESOLUTION APPROVING**  
**THE FY 2015 COMMUTER CONNECTIONS WORK PROGRAM**

**WHEREAS**, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) has been designated by the Governors of Maryland and Virginia and the Mayor of the District of Columbia as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Washington Metropolitan Area; and

**WHEREAS**, on March 19, 2014, the TPB approved the FY 2015 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP); and

**WHEREAS**, the draft FY 2016 CCWP was reviewed by the Commuter Connections Subcommittee of the TPB Technical Committee on January 20, 2015; and

**WHEREAS**, comments and suggestions on the work activities in the draft FY 2015 CCWP were reviewed by District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT), the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT), and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and incorporated into the final version; and

**WHEREAS**, the Draft FY 2016 CCWP was released for public comment on February 12; and

**WHEREAS**, the TPB Technical Committee reviewed the work program at its meetings on February 6 and March 6;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD approves the FY 2016 Commuter Connections Work Program for the Metropolitan Washington Region.

**Adopted by the Transportation Planning Board at its regular meeting on March 18, 2015.**



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## SUMMARY

### Program Overview

The Fiscal Year 2016 Commuter Connections Work Program (CCWP) consists of a core program of regional transportation demand management operational activities funded jointly by state and local jurisdictions, plus jurisdictional programs that are conducted at the discretion of individual state funding agencies.

### Funding

The regional state funding shares for the program elements are defined using a formula agreed to by the state funding agencies. Funding agencies for the programs listed in this document include the District Department of Transportation, Maryland Department of Transportation, and the Virginia Department of Transportation. The Maryland Transit Administration and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation provide direct funding to their local jurisdictions for transportation demand management activities that support the regional Commuter Connections program. The costs of the jurisdictional activities are allocated directly to the jurisdiction or jurisdictions that choose to conduct them. This ensures that the regional activities upon which all other activities depend will be conducted regionally, and that the costs are allocated to the participating funding agencies according to the agreed upon funding formula. At the same time, considerable flexibility is available to the state funding agencies and other agencies to define and fund discretionary activities that respond to their individual policy and funding priorities.

The FY 2016 Commuter Connections program elements are classified as follows:

<b>REGIONAL PROGRAMS</b>	<b>JURISDICTIONAL PROGRAMS</b>
Commuter Operations Center	Employer Outreach*
Guaranteed Ride Home	GRH Baltimore
Marketing	
Monitoring and Evaluation	

*\*Includes both a Regional and Jurisdictional Component*

The CCWP was re-structured and streamlined in FY 2006 to clarify and simplify funding responsibilities. The FY 2016 CCWP continues this effort aimed at streamlining the administration and oversight processes for the program. Commuter Connections has expanded incrementally since its inception in 1974 as the Commuter Club, with different program elements having different jurisdictional participation and funding shares. As the program became more complex, it became increasingly difficult to track how much each state funding agency was participating in and paying for each program element. Therefore, a funding formula was devised.

### Planning Process Requirements

The TPB is required by federal regulations to approve a congestion management process which includes travel demand management as part of the metropolitan transportation plan. Commuter Connections constitutes the major demand management component of the congestion

management process to be approved by the TPB. Commuter Connections also provides transportation emission reduction measure benefits for inclusion in the air quality conformity determination, which must be approved by the TPB as part of the annual update of the Constrained Long Range Plan and Transportation Improvement Program. In addition, Commuter Connections programs may be needed to meet future Climate Change and Green House Gas emission targets that may be set for the transportation sector in the region.

#### Description of Commuter Connections Committees

The increasing complexity of the program prompted the creation of a working group to provide administrative and programmatic oversight of the core program cost elements. An agreement was signed in FY 2011 between COG and the state funding agencies for the support of the Commuter Connections TDM program in the Washington metropolitan region. The agreement will continue to be reviewed and updated as needed during FY 2016. COG and the state funding agencies have an established working group; the State TDM (STDM) Work Group, which meets monthly (except for the month of August) and consists of representatives of the state transportation funding agencies in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia. The State TDM Work Group helps to define the program content and budget for each fiscal year and helps to develop a detailed annual Work Program in collaboration with COG/TPB staff and the Commuter Connections Subcommittee. The draft work program is reviewed by program stakeholders and the Commuter Connections Subcommittee. The final Work Program is reviewed by the TPB Technical Committee and approved by the TPB. Program developments and/or significant changes to the CCWP made by the State TDM Work Group will be reviewed with the TPB's Technical Committee and in some cases the TPB's Steering Committee in the event the items or information will be presented to the TPB.

The State TDM Work Group also review's all RFP's and RFQ's as part of the work program and will identify selection committee members for individual contract solicitations. The State TDM Work Group will review and approve all CCWP work products with input from the Commuter Connections Subcommittee. Upon request, COG/TPB staff can provide additional details for projects being implemented under each program area.

As shown in Figure 2 on Page 9, the Commuter Connections Subcommittee will continue to provide overall technical review of the regional program elements in this Work Program and meet every other month. The Subcommittee will also review, provide comments, and endorse reports and other products for release. The Bike To Work Day Steering Committee will meet every other month from September to May to organize the regional Bike To Work Day event. The Car Free Day Steering Committee will meet every other month from March until September to organize the regional Car Free Day event. The Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee will continue to meet quarterly on technical issues regarding the regional TDM software system. The TDM Evaluation Group will meet as needed to provide direction and review of the regional TDM evaluation project. The Employer Outreach Committee will meet quarterly to review and discuss Employer Outreach efforts. The Regional TDM Marketing Group will also meet quarterly to provide input and coordination of regional TDM advertising and marketing efforts. Oversight for jurisdictional program elements will be provided by the states and agencies that are funding them.

Specialized project work groups will continue to meet as needed to address particular implementation issues, such as the development of regional TDM marketing campaigns and the Employer Recognition Awards. A Strategic Plan was adopted in November 2007 and has been updated annually and most recently in January 2014 that serves as a framework regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Commuter Connections stakeholders. The Strategic Plan can be accessed at [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org) under the 'About Us' Publications link and includes a mission statement, definition of Commuter Connections, overall program and operating objectives, network responsibilities for each program area that include objectives and acceptable performance levels, a committee structure, sample meeting calendar, and internal and external report deliverables.

### Key Elements and Highlights

The key elements and highlights of the FY 2016 Commuter Connections Work Program are summarized as follows:

- The Commuter Operations Center will provide ridematching services to commuters through a central toll free number "1-800-745-RIDE" and [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org) web site, and support to commuter assistance programs operated by local jurisdiction, transportation management associations, and employer-based commuter assistance programs.
- Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) will provide users of alternative commute modes up to four free rides home per year in a taxi or rental car in the event of an unexpected personal or family emergency or unscheduled overtime.
- Marketing will provide frequent regional promotion of alternative commute options, including; car/vanpooling, teleworking, mass transit, bicycling, walking; and support programs such as Guaranteed Ride Home, the Commuter Connections network ridematching services and Bike to Work Day. The Marketing program aims to raise awareness of alternative commute options, and support the Commuter Connections network in persuading commuters to switch to alternative commute modes from the use of single-occupant vehicles, and persuading commuters currently using alternative commute modes to continue to use those modes. The 'Pool Rewards incentive program provides a cash incentive to new carpoolers and vanpoolers. Commuter Connections will coordinate the region's Car-Free Day event as part of World Car Free Day. The Car-Free Day event will encourage commuters and the general population to leave their cars home or to use alternative forms of transportation such as carpools, vanpools, public transit, bicycles, or walking.
- Monitoring and Evaluation provides data collection and analysis activities as well as program tracking and monitoring reports for each program area. The regional TERM Evaluation Framework Methodology document will be updated, the 2016 State of the Commute survey will be conducted, and the 2016 GRH Applicant survey will be conducted. Monitoring and evaluation activities are used extensively to determine the program's effectiveness. Evaluation results have been used in the past to make program

adjustments; for example, the 'Pool Rewards program was expanded to include vanpools and funding for the project was customized to meet actual demand, the Telework program was streamlined due to increased participation by the private sector; changes have been made to the Guaranteed Ride Home program guidelines based on participant survey feedback; and target marketing for GRH was re-introduced in the region after it was found that there was a dramatic drop in registrations when the marketing for this measure was streamlined into the mass marketing program.

- Employer Outreach will support outreach and marketing to the region's employers to implement new or expanded employer-based alternative commute modes and incentives such as transit and vanpool benefits, telework, preferential parking for carpools and vanpools, carpool and vanpool formation and incentives, flexible work schedules, and bicycling amenities. The outreach program also encourages employees' use of alternative commute modes such as ridesharing, transit, telework, bicycling, and walking. The outreach program also provides assistance to employers to hold bicycling seminars for employees, maintaining an up-to-date regional Bicycling Guide, providing information on workforce housing programs to promote "Live Near Your Work," and offering car-sharing and bike-sharing information to lower employers' fleet management costs. Maryland jurisdictions will provide resources to employers on the benefits of teleworking and assist them in starting or expanding telework programs.
- GRH Baltimore will provide users of alternative commute modes in the Baltimore metropolitan region and St. Mary's county up to four free rides home per year in a taxi or rental car in the event of an unexpected personal or family emergency or unscheduled overtime. Additionally, a GRH Baltimore region and St. Mary's County Applicant Survey will be conducted in FY 2016.

Figure 1 on page 7 of this document illustrates that the Commuter Connections service area is much larger than the Washington 8-hour ozone nonattainment area for workers eligible for the GRH program and larger still for workers who can access the Commuter Connections ridesharing services. The total Commuter Connections service area has approximately 10 million residents.

### **Program Background**

Commuter Connections is a continuing commuter assistance program for the Washington region which encourages commuters to use alternatives to driving alone in a private automobile, including ridesharing, transit, telecommuting, bicycling, and walking. The program has evolved and expanded over the past four decades following its inception in 1974 as the Commuter Club. In the mid-1980s, in an effort to better share regional ridesharing information the Commuter Club was expanded into the Ride Finders Network, which included Alexandria, Fairfax County, Montgomery County, Prince William County and the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission. By 1996, after steady growth in both size and strength, the Ride Finders Network became Commuter Connections, the commuter transportation network serving the Washington metropolitan region, encompassing twelve counties, four cities, and eight federal agencies. The Commuter Operations Center component of the current Commuter Connections Program

represents the evolution of the earlier Commuter Club and Ride Finders Network programs.

In the mid-1990s, several new elements were added to the Commuter Connections Program as Transportation Emissions Reduction Measures (TERMs) to help meet regional air quality conformity requirements. All of these measures were designed to produce specific reductions in Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) by reducing vehicle trips and vehicle miles of travel associated with commuting. The measures were developed by the Travel Management Subcommittee of the TPB Technical Committee, and adopted into the regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) by the Transportation Planning Board (TPB). These measures were funded jointly by the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia Departments of Transportation, with some variation in funding shares for the different measures.

<u>Measure</u>	<u>Date Implemented</u>
Commuter Operations Center	1974
Metropolitan Washington	
Telework Resource Center	1996
Integrated Ridesharing	1996
Employer Outreach	1997
Guaranteed Ride Home	1997
Employer Outreach for Bicycling	1998
Mass Marketing of Alternative	
Commute Options	2003
GRH Baltimore	2010

As the program elements shown above were implemented, their performance was evaluated over time. In FY 2006, the measures were revised to focus resources on the most effective program components. The total daily impacts of the Commuter Connections program were calculated in FY 2014 to be:

	<u>Daily Impacts</u>
VT Reductions:	132,000
VMT Reductions:	2,500,000
NOx Reductions (Tons):	1.0
VOC Reductions (Tons):	0.5
	<u>Annual Impacts</u>
PM 2.5 Reductions (Tons)	12
PM 2.5 Precursor NOx	
Reductions (Tons)	280
CO2 Reductions (Tons)	262,000

Extensive monitoring and evaluation have been carried out for the Commuter Connections Program over the past several years, and comprehensive data sets are available for reviewing the performance of individual program elements and identifying areas for both strengthening the performance of the program and streamlining the oversight and management procedures. The Program has been shown through the FY 2012 – 2014 TERM Analysis Report to be a highly cost-effective way to reduce vehicle trips (VT), vehicle miles of travel (VMT), and vehicle emissions associated with commuting. The following overall cost-effectiveness measures for the Commuter Connections Program are based on the results of the FY 2012 – 2014 TERM Analysis Report that

was released on November 18, 2014:

**Daily Impacts**

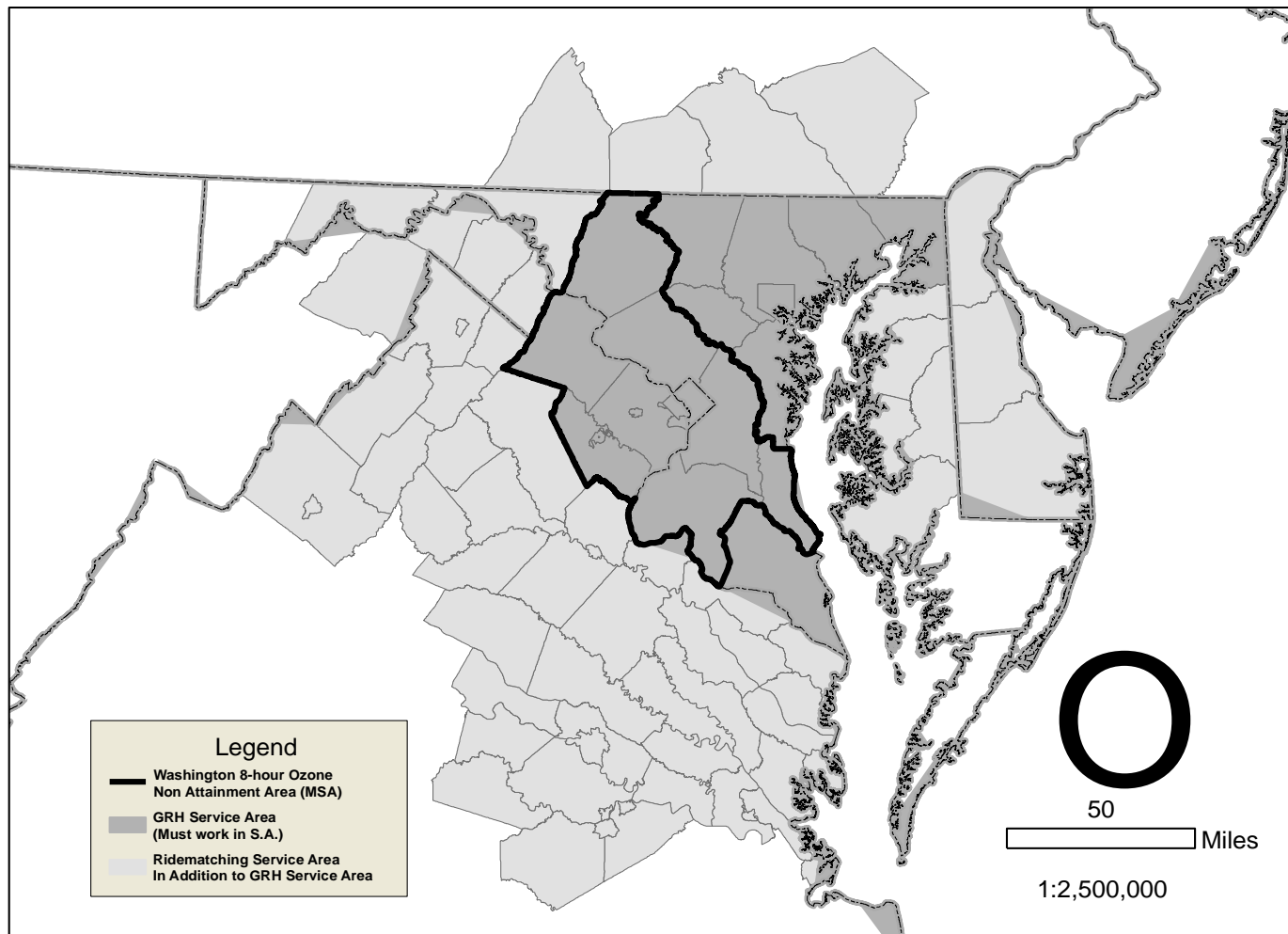
Cost per VT reduced:	\$0.16
Cost per VMT reduced:	\$0.01
Cost per ton of NOx reduced:	\$20,000
Cost per ton of VOC reduced:	\$41,000

**Annual Impacts**

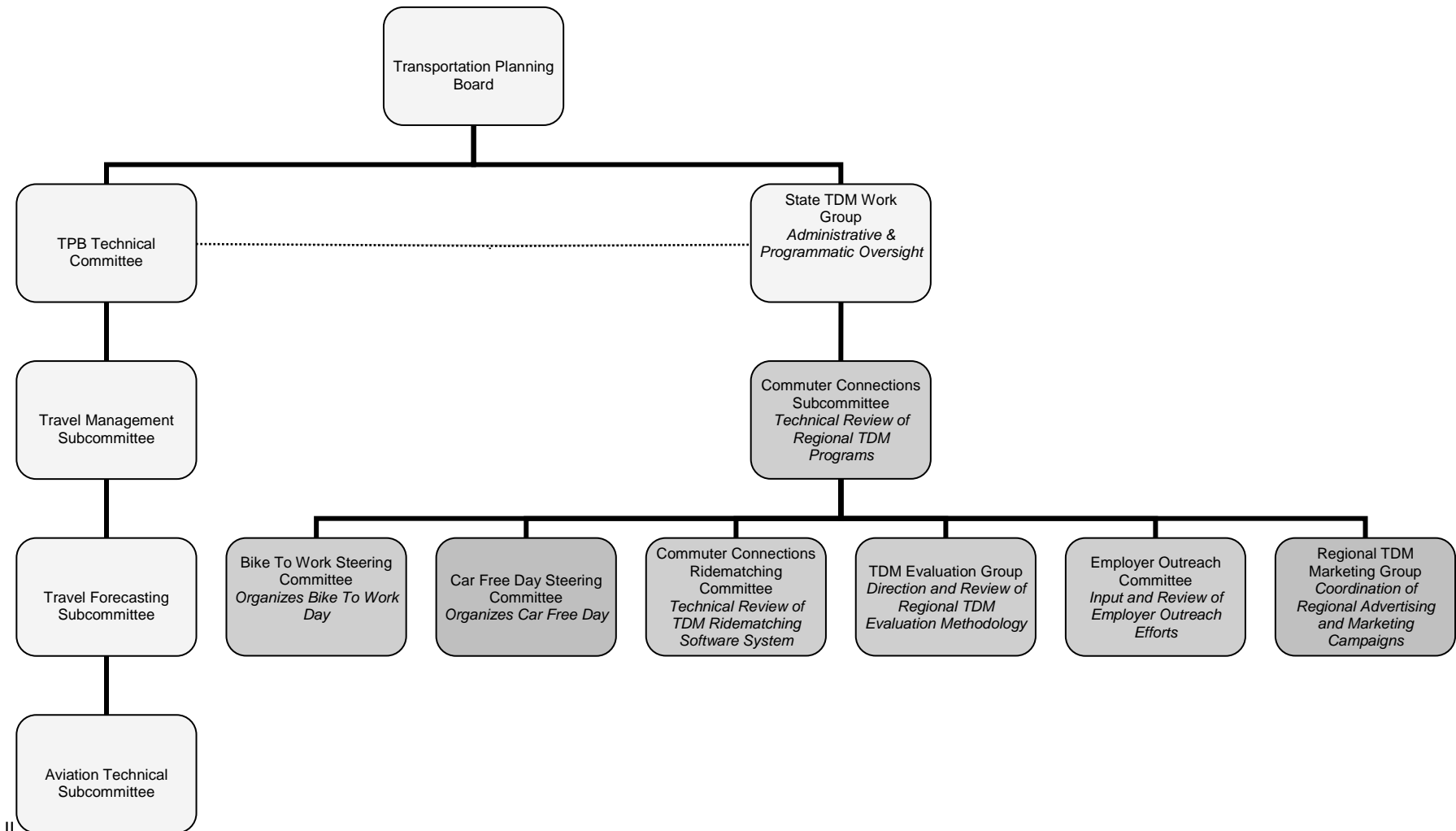
Cost Per PM 2.5 Reduced	\$461,000
Cost per PM 2.5 Precursor	
NOx Reduced	\$ 19,000
Cost per CO2 Reduced	\$ 21

The Commuter Connections Program is generally regarded as among the most effective commuter assistance programs in the nation in terms of reductions effected in vehicle trips and vehicle miles of travel. Existing data collected on Commuter Connections program performance has been used to refine and enhance the program and to streamline procedures for program oversight and administration.

Figure 1: Geographic Areas Serviced by Commuter Connections



**FIGURE 2: COMMUTER CONNECTIONS STRUCTURE**





**Table 1**  
**FY 2016 COMMUTER CONNECTIONS BUDGET AND WORK PROGRAM EXPENDITURES**

WORK ACTIVITY	DIRECT SALARIES STAFF	M& A 25%	LEAVE BENEFITS 19%	FRINGE BENEFITS 28%	INDIRECT COSTS 31 %	DATA & PC COSTS	CONTRACT SERVICES	DIRECT COSTS	TOTAL
Commuter Operations Center	\$145,711	\$36,428	\$34,606	\$60,689	\$86,004	\$89,534	\$70,000	\$17,636	\$540,608
Guaranteed Ride Home	\$107,614	\$26,904	\$25,558	\$44,821	\$63,518	\$6,000	\$148,000	\$308,871	\$731,286
Marketing	\$195,359	\$48,840	\$45,638	\$80,034	\$114,660	\$4,000	\$690,000	\$1,681,634	\$2,860,165
Monitoring and Evaluation	\$142,207	\$35,552	\$33,774	\$59,229	\$83,936	\$1,000	\$494,500	\$17,802	\$868,000
Employer Outreach	\$46,183	\$11,546	\$10,968	\$19,235	\$27,259	\$15,000	\$0	\$522,087	\$652,278
GRH Baltimore	\$19,383	\$4,846	\$4,603	\$8,073	\$11,440	\$0	\$59,000	\$62,655	\$170,000
TOTAL	\$656,457	\$164,116	\$155,147	\$272,081	\$386,817	\$115,534	\$1,461,500	\$2,610,685	\$5,822,337

**Table 2**  
**COMMUTER CONNECTIONS FISCAL YEAR 2016 BUDGET**  
**BY STATE FUNDING AGENCY AND PROGRAM ELEMENT**

FUNDS SOURCE	Commuter Operations Center	Guaranteed Ride Home	Marketing	Monitoring & Evaluation	Employer Outreach*	GRH Baltimore	TOTALS
District of Columbia	\$55,389	\$85,561	\$334,639	\$101,556	\$16,882	\$0	\$594,027
State of Maryland	\$212,560	\$328,347	\$1,284,214	\$389,732	\$569,695	\$170,000	\$2,954,548
Commonwealth of Virginia	\$205,459	\$317,378	\$1,241,312	\$376,712	\$65,701	\$0	\$2,206,562
Other**	\$67,200						\$67,200
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$540,608</b>	<b>\$731,286</b>	<b>\$2,860,165</b>	<b>\$868,000</b>	<b>\$652,278</b>	<b>\$170,000</b>	<b>\$5,822,337</b>

\* Virginia and the District of Columbia have allocated \$755,889 dollars to local jurisdictions and contractors to implement the TERM. DC has allocated \$260,231 and Virginia has allocated \$587,666.

\*\*Software User Fees

## Detailed Task Descriptions and Cost Estimates for the FY 2016 Commuter Connections Work Program

### I. COMMUTER OPERATIONS CENTER

The Commuter Operations Center has been in existence since 1974 and provides local jurisdictions, Transportation Management Associations (TMAs), and federal government agencies a centralized database for commuting information. As part of the overall program, COG/TPB staff provides the following services:

- Ridematching coordination, training and technical assistance to local agencies;
- transportation information services to the general public;
- maintenance of the regional commuter database system hardware and software programming code; and
- data updates to software system.

The program is comprised the four project areas listed below. The total annual budget for the Commuter Operations Center regional program is \$540,608.

#### A. RIDEMATCHING COORDINATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Each month, COG receives several hundred applications for ridematching and transit information. More than 90% of these applications are received through the Commuter Connections Web site. COG/TPB staff reviews and processes all applications received through the Web site. Matchlists for carpool and vanpool information are sent daily by mail or email (depending on the applicant's preference). Each local Commuter Connections network member has access to the regional TDM on-line system and is notified through a customized queue when a commuter application has been entered through the Commuter Connections Web site from a commuter living in that network member's jurisdiction or in some cases; depending on the network member, it may be a commuter working in their service area. The queue serves as notification that the network member staff should take ownership of the record and follow up with the commuter to provide additional assistance, as needed. Applications received at COG through the mail or fax are forwarded to the network member serving the applicant's home jurisdiction or work jurisdiction for entry into the rideshare database.

The following local jurisdictions, transportation agencies, transportation management associations, and federal government agencies deliver ridematching and commuter assistance services through the Commuter Connections network to their residents and/or workers:

District of Columbia	Maryland	Virginia
COG/TPB	ARTMA	City of Alexandria
	Baltimore City	Arlington County

<b>District of Columbia</b>	<b>Maryland</b>	<b>Virginia</b>
	The BWI Partnership	Army National Guard Readiness Center
	Baltimore Metropolitan Council	Dulles Area Transportation Association
	Bethesda Transportation Solutions	Fairfax County
	Food and Drug Administration	George Washington Regional Commission
	Frederick County	LINK – Reston Transportation Management Association
	Harford County	Loudoun County
	Howard County	Northern Neck Planning District Commission
	Maryland Transit Administration	Northern Shenandoah Regional Valley Commission
	Montgomery County	Potomac and Rappahannock Regional Commission
	National Institutes of Health	Rappahannock – Rapidan Regional Commission
	North Bethesda Transportation Center	
	Prince George's County	
	Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland	

COG/TPB staff administers ridematching services on behalf of the District of Columbia and Arlington County. The local jurisdiction commuter assistance programs listed in Maryland and Virginia receive separate grants from the Maryland Transit Administration and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation to provide local services and to help support regional TDM program activities.

The Commuter Connections web-based TDM system includes ridematching databases from one commuter assistance program in southern Virginia and the entire state of Delaware and were incorporated into the TDM system's database to provide improved commuter ridematching through a single database for Virginia, Maryland and the District. These programs are: RideShare (serving the Charlottesville region) and Rideshare Delaware (serving the state of Delaware). The staffs from these programs and the commuters they serve have access to the TDM system for matching in carpools and vanpools and have customized access to other modules in the system such as SchoolPool and Guaranteed Ride Home. COG/TPB staff provides technical assistance to these three programs.

During FY 2015, COG/TPB staff will continue to provide technical support and training to Commuter Connections network member agencies for the regional Commuter Connections TDM software system. Staff will continue to review and distribute ridematching applications received from employers and the general public. Matchlist and renewal notice generation and distribution services will also be provided through COG. COG/TPB staff will produce network member technical assistance reports from the Commuter Connections TDM system, and provide staff support and coordination to the Commuter Connections State TDM Work Group, the Commuter Connections Subcommittee, the Commuter Connections Ridematching Committee, and to the Federal ETC Advisory Group. COG/TPB staff will also fulfill daily network member data requests. Federal Agency Employee Transportation Coordinator training will be coordinated and in some instances given by COG/TPB staff. Staff will also produce an annual Commuter Connections Work Program for FY 2017. The funding agreement between COG and the state funding agencies will continue to be reviewed for a final update and signatures during FY 2016.

COG/TPB staff will also work to expand the regional SchoolPool program so that more schools, safe routes to school coordinators and jurisdictions use the service, maintain the special events ridematching software module, and monitor the trip tracking software module and expand the use of the Commuter Challenge module.

**Cost Estimate:** \$120,268

**Products:** Database documentation of specific technical actions implemented. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Documentation of Subcommittee and Ridematching Committee meetings. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Documentation of daily technical client member support given through COG's Help Desk. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Daily matchlist generation and distribution. *(COG/TPB staff)*

TDM Web Based System Training Manual updates, as needed. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Monthly commuter renewal notices as part of the purge process. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Review and update existing Emergency Management Continuity of Operations Plan for Commuter Connections program services. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Transportation Demand Management Resources Directory update twice yearly. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Federal ETC Web site updates. *(COG/TPB staff)*

FY 2017 Commuter Connections Work Program. *(COG/TPB staff)*

**Services:**

Software client Member Help Desk technical support. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Software and customer service training, as needed. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Federal agency ETC training and support to the Federal ETC Advisory Group. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Staff the Commuter Connections Subcommittee, Ridematching Committee, and STD M Work Group *(COG/TPB Staff)*

Work with state funding agencies to review and update Funding Agreement *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with State Funding Agencies)*

**Schedule:**

July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

**Oversight:**

Ridematching Committee

- Communicate Technical Support Issues
- Share knowledge and experience on “Hot Topic” Issues
- Provide input and feedback on Software Technical Policies (i.e. purge process, Help Desk)
- Provide requests for software training

Commuter Connections Subcommittee

- Provide input and comments to FY 2017 CCWP
- Provide input and feedback on all programs and projects in CCWP

STD M Work Group

- Provide input and comments to FY 2017 CCWP
- Provide input, feedback and approval on all programs and projects in CCWP
- Review and provides updates, if needed, to Funding Agreement

## B. TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION SERVICES

COG has provided transportation information services for 40 years in the Washington Metropolitan region. The Commuter Operations Center provides basic carpool/vanpool, transit, telecommuting, bicycling, and walking information. Specialized transportation information is also provided in support of Bike to Work Day, Car Free Day, Air Quality Action Days, Job Access Reverse Commute, SchoolPool, Special Events, Commuter Challenge, Bulletin Board and other regional commuter service programs.

COG staffs the regional commute information telephone number 1-800-745-RIDE. Calls received at COG are transferred to the local Commuter Connections network member site (based on jurisdiction of residence or in some cases work location of the caller) where applicable. COG/TPB staff provides transportation information services to those commuters who cannot be assigned to a client member site, including residents of the District of Columbia. COG receives several hundred calls per week through the 800 number. COG staff also responds to daily requests and questions received by email.

During FY 2016, COG/TPB staff will continue to provide traveler information on alternatives to driving alone to the general public by telephone, Web site, electronically, and through printed information. Staff will continue processing applications from the general public and/or from Commuter Connections network members who request the service on a permanent or temporary basis based on information requests received. COG/TPB staff will answer the regional "800" telephone line, TDD line, and respond to e-mails on information requests from the Commuter Connections TDM system Web service.

**Cost Estimate:** \$90,728

**Products:** Provide commuter traveler information on alternatives to driving alone to the general public through the Web site, electronically, or through printed information.  
(COG/TPB staff)

**Services:** Provide commuter traveler information on alternatives to driving alone to the general public by telephone.  
(COG/TPB staff)

Process applications from the general public.  
(COG/TPB staff)

Answer and respond to commuter calls from the regional "800" Commuter Connections line and COG TDD line. (COG/TPB staff)

Respond to commuter e-mails from the Commuter Connections TDM Web service. (COG/TPB staff)

Provide general public customer service. (COG/TPB staff)

**Schedule:** July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

**Oversight:** Ridematching Committee

- Provide input and feedback to information services policies and procedures.

C. TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION SOFTWARE, HARDWARE, AND DATABASE MAINTENANCE

The regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) software system is provided as a regional database resource with secure online access to nearly 30 commuter assistance programs that include local rideshare agencies, Transportation Management Associations, and federal government agencies. The commuter assistance programs use the TDM software system to service their local commuters' transportation needs for alternative commuting information.

This project includes the daily routine monitoring and maintenance of the TDM software system as well as the hosting of the on-line system through COG's data center. Tasks include: daily backup of the TDM database, maintenance of the TDM Web system servers, contingency management services, Windows support to TDM Oracle database and to virtual web server, oracle database administration and support, documentation of system and system changes, Storage Area Network (SAN) connectivity and maintenance, and the maintenance and replacement of hardware as needed.

This project will also include ongoing software code upgrades to the Web-based TDM system. Changes made to the software code will be reflected in a responsive web design format in order to be displayed on smart phone devices such as Android, Blackberry, and iPhone. Access to specific system modules will be provided through a mobile application.



<b>Cost Estimate:</b>	\$273,624
<b>Consultant Costs as Part of Estimate:</b>	\$ 70,000
<i>(Maintenance Contracts/Software)</i>	

**Services:** Provide daily routine monitoring and maintenance of the TDM system and database for approximately 30 commuter assistance programs. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Maintain and update TDM system servers, software programming code, and web hosting. *(COG/TPB staff in consultation with contractor).*

**Schedule:** July 1, 2015- June 30, 2016

**Oversight:** Ridematching Committee

- Provide input and feedback to TDM system maintenance policies.
- Provide recommendations for TDM Web based system software code upgrades.

#### D. COMMUTER INFORMATION SYSTEM

The Commuter Information System project provides the TDM system with a GIS based information system that includes transit stop data, telework center locations, park and ride lot locations, and bicycling information as part of the ridematching functionality.

During FY 2016, COG/TPB staff will continue integration activities of new transit, telework center, park and ride lot, and bicycle route data into the TDM system server. Staff will also continue to obtain updated transit data, street centerline information and park-and-ride lot data from local jurisdictions and transit properties and reformat this data as necessary to the proper GIS format for use on the regional TDM system. Updates to the park-and-ride and telework center datasets for use on the TDM system will continue as will updates to the interactive GIS-based Web site application to include updated local and regional information for 11,000 plus transit, telework center, park-and-ride lots, and bicycle lanes/paths records. The bicycle routing module will also be updated to reflect any new and/or expanded bicycle paths and/or trails.

**Cost Estimate:** \$55,988

**Services:** Update local and regional information for transit, telework center locations, park and ride lots, and bicycle route information which will be used in the TDM Web system. *(COG/TPB staff)*

**Schedule:** July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

**Oversight:****Ridematching Committee**

- Provide input into data source updates for TDM web based system.

**II. REGIONAL GUARANTEED RIDE HOME PROGRAM**

The regional Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program eliminates a major barrier to using transit, carpooling, vanpooling, bicycling or walking to work. Studies have shown that a commuter's fear of being "stranded" at work if they or a family member become ill, or if they must work unexpected overtime, is one of the most compelling reasons commuters do not rideshare or use transit to travel to work. The regional GRH program eliminates this barrier by providing a free ride home in the event of an unexpected personal emergency or unscheduled overtime. The GRH program's free ride home is offered only to commuters that carpool, vanpool, use transit, bicycle, or walk to work at least two days per work week. As a result of the GRH program, some single occupant vehicle drivers will switch to a ridesharing or transit commuting alternative, and current ridesharing and transit users will increase the usage of these alternative commute modes. The GRH program is an insurance program for those commuters who do not drive alone to their worksite.

The Guaranteed Ride Home program is a regional program and consists of the project area previously outlined in Figure 1. The annual budget for the Guaranteed Ride Home program for the two project areas outlined below is \$731,286.

**A. GENERAL OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE**

COG/TPB staff processes all GRH applications received through the Commuter Connections web-based TDM software system, or by mail or fax. Using the web based TDM system, COG/TPB staff registers qualifying applicants, produces GRH registration ID cards, and sends ID card and participation guidelines to new registrants. Commuters can obtain information about the GRH program and complete an application on the Commuter Connections Web site, [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org). Commuters may also call COG's Commuter Connections 800 telephone number, 1-800-745-RIDE, to ask questions about the GRH program and/or request information and an application. The 800 number is equipped with a menu so that callers can choose the menu item that best fits their needs. All GRH questions and requests for information and applications are taken by COG/TPB staff.

COG/TPB staff also mails GRH applications to GRH users who have used the GRH program without formally registering. GRH guidelines permit a commuter to use the GRH service one time as a "one-time exception" before they register. Also, COG/TPB staff mails transit vouchers to GRH users who used transit as part of their GRH trip. All vouchers and invoices from transportation service providers are processed by COG/TPB staff.

In the event the commuter has not supplied an e-mail address, COG/TPB staff mails a re-registration notice to commuters who could not be contacted by telephone. The notice contains an application which the commuter can complete and send to COG to re-register. The commuter can also call Commuter Connections or visit the Commuter Connections Web site to re-register.

During FY 2016, staff will assist the Commuter Connections Subcommittee in reviewing the GRH participation guidelines for any recommended changes. These recommendations will be presented to the Commuter Connections Subcommittee for their final review and approval. In the past, recommendations have been made to modify and add participation guidelines to better convey the GRH trip authorization, GRH re-registration, and one-time exception rules and restrictions.

COG/TPB staff will continue to respond to the general public and to GRH applicants for registrations and re-registrations to the program. Registered commuters will be notified when their GRH registration is about to expire. Staff will continue to prepare and send new and re-registration GRH ID cards, registration letters, and participation guidelines on a weekly basis. Staff will also continue to monitor and maintain the GRH applicant database and server. COG/TPB staff will continue to update and maintain program participation guidelines, and provide annual customer service training to the daily operations contractor and COG/TPB staff assigned to the project.

**Cost Estimate:** \$215,982

**Direct Costs (Telephone, Copies, etc) as Part of Estimate: \$26,843**

**Products:** GRH new and re-registration ID cards and registration letters  
(COG/TPB staff)

GRH Program participation guidelines. (COG/TPB staff)

**Services:** Process application requests from the general public for registration and re-registration to the program. (COG/TPB staff)

Notify commuters when registration is about to expire.  
(COG/TPB staff)

Monitor and update GRH applicant database. (COG/TPB staff)

**Schedule:** July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

**Oversight:** Commuter Connections Subcommittee

- Provide input and feedback on GRH program participation guidelines and policies.

## B. PROCESS TRIP REQUESTS AND PROVIDE TRIPS

GRH transportation service is provided by several taxi companies, a rental car company, and a paratransit company, all under contract with COG. Commuters make their GRH trip request through a menu option provided on COG's Commuter Connections 800 telephone number. This menu option transfers calls for GRH trips directly to an operations contractor. This contractor reviews and assesses the trip request and approves or denies the request based on the GRH Participation Guidelines. The contractor then arranges the approved trips with the appropriate transportation providers. If a trip request is denied, the commuter is offered an arranged trip at their own expense.

During FY 2016, COG/TPB staff will continue management and monitoring of contract services for day-to-day operations services. Day to day operations include confirming ride request eligibility; dispatching rides through the ten ride service providers; tracking ride requests in the GRH database; and processing invoices for payment for ride service providers, the daily operations contractor and for the general public for transit vouchers.

Customer service training will be provided to all Guaranteed Ride Home call center agents.

**Cost Estimate:** \$515,304

### ***Consultant/Contractor Costs as Part of Estimate:***

<i>(Daily Operations)</i>	<i>\$148,000</i>
<i>(Cab and Car Rental Companies)</i>	<i>\$285,000</i>

### **Services:**

Process GRH trip requests, approve/deny requests, and arrange rides. *(Daily Operations Contractor)*

Management and monitoring of contract services for day-to-day operations and ten cab and car rental ride service providers. This includes processing invoices for payment for contractors and for the general public for transit vouchers. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Customer service training for GRH call center agents. *(COG/TPB Staff)*

Provide GRH Rides *(Cab and Car Rental Companies)*

**Schedule:** July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

**Oversight:** Commuter Connections Subcommittee

- Provide input and feedback on GRH program operations.

### **III. MARKETING**

The Marketing program delivers a “brand promise” for Commuter Connections as an umbrella solution for commuters seeking alternative commuting options within the region through regional marketing campaigns and special events and initiatives. The use of media and other forms of communication at high reach and frequency levels are used to communicate the benefits of alternative commute methods to Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV) commuters most likely to shift to non-SOV travel.

Marketing is a regional program and consists of five project areas listed below. The total annual project cost for the program tasks is \$2,869,165.

#### **A. TDM MARKETING AND ADVERTISING**

Regional TDM marketing campaigns aim to encourage both current SOV and non-SOV populations to either start or to continue using alternative transportation modes for commuting. Regional TDM marketing campaigns complement other on-going Commuter Connections program services that have been implemented in the region by increasing their overall efficiency and effectiveness.

Commuter Connections regional marketing campaigns may include, but are not limited in the use of direct mail to households and employers, radio, television, Web site advertisements and banner ads, phone book advertising, keyword search engine sponsorships, bus and rail advertising, and special event advertising. COG/TPB staff and its network members may also participate in promotions at employment sites and special events.

The overall objective of the project will be to continue to brand Commuter Connections and to meet the Mass Marketing TERM impact goals. A marketing/advertising/public relations contractor will be used to produce and execute the creative, copywriting, and earned media (public relations) plan.

The marketing/advertising/public relations contractor provides expertise to develop the regional marketing campaign. The program builds upon current regional TDM marketing efforts by local, state, and regional agencies to establish a coordinated and continuous year round marketing effort for regional TDM programs. Partnerships between COG and area transit agencies have been established and are maintained to enable the promotion of incentives such as the GRH program to transit riders. COG has also partnered with local jurisdictions to promote various program services through value

added media opportunities.

A Marketing Communications Plan and Schedule is issued within the first quarter of the fiscal year that will outline the overall marketing strategy to be used for marketing campaign. Input on this plan will be provided by the state funding agencies and the Regional TDM Marketing Group members. A Marketing Planning Workgroup will then be formed provide input to the detailed creative development of the regional marketing campaigns. Campaign summary documents will be produced that will outline campaign specifics such as direct mail distribution points (i.e. zip codes), radio stations used, etc.

COG/TPB staff will update and implement a public relations plan and continuously update the SharePoint site for posting marketing and advertising materials for review by the regional Marketing Planning Workgroup members. An outbound email box has also been established at [docomments@mwcoq.org](mailto:docomments@mwcoq.org) for communications on reports and other work program products that require feedback by Commuter Connections committee groups.

A regional commute alternatives newsletter, *Commuter Connections*, will be published quarterly and distributed to several thousand employers. The focus of the newsletter is on federal, state, regional and local information and/or ideas employers can use to either start, expand or maintain employer-based commute benefit programs. In addition, COG/TPB staff works with the General Services Administration to produce a quarterly Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) newsletter insertion into the Commuter Connections newsletter, for distribution to more than 100 Federal ETC's.

COG/TPB staff will continue to maintain and update all Commuter Connections collateral materials and Web based information. The regional Resource Guide and Strategic Marketing Plan will also be updated with input from member agencies.

<b>Cost Estimate:</b>	<b>\$2,309,998</b>
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***Consultant/Contractor Costs as Part of Estimate:***

<i>(Advertising and Marketing Contractor)</i>	<b>\$ 500,000</b>
<i>(Media Buy)</i>	<b>\$1,100,000</b>
<i>(Postage/Printing)</i>	<b>\$ 278,286</b>

<b>Products:</b>	SharePoint postings for marketing and advertising materials for review by workgroup members and all other Commuter Connections committees. <i>(COG/TPB staff)</i>
	Earned media plan. <i>(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)</i>

Quarterly employer newsletter and Federal agency Employee Transportation Coordinator newsletter. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

Mass Marketing material updates and re-prints. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

Commuter Connections Web Site updates. *(COG/TPB staff in consultation with consultant as needed)*

Creative materials for regional TDM marketing campaigns. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

Bus and rail advertising development and placement. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

Special event advertising development and placement. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

Marketing Communications Plan and schedule. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

2015 Strategic Marketing Plan and Resource Guide. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

1<sup>st</sup> Half of the Fiscal Year Regional TDM Marketing Campaign Summary Document. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

2<sup>nd</sup> Half of the Fiscal Year Regional TDM Marketing Campaign Summary Document. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

**Services:**

Placement of advertisements including, but not limited to: Web site advertisement through banner ads, placement of keyword search engine sponsorships, radio, print, and television, as needed. *(Consultant)*

Placement of advertisements in printed and electronic telephone directories. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Staff the Regional TDM Marketing Group. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Track the effectiveness of advertising campaigns through call volumes and internet hits. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Process media placement invoices. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Monitor and adjust the implementation of regional marketing campaigns. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Attend and participate in commuter promotional events and special events, as needed. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Management and oversight of marketing contract. *(COG/TPB staff)*

**Schedule:**

July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

Marketing Communications Plan and Schedule: September 2015

2015 Strategic Marketing Plan and Resource Guide: December 2015

1<sup>st</sup> Half of the Fiscal Year Regional TDM Marketing Campaign Summary Document: December 2015

2<sup>nd</sup> Half of the Fiscal Year Regional TDM Marketing Campaign Summary Document: June 2016

**Oversight:**

Regional TDM Marketing Group

- Provide input and feedback on marketing plan, collateral materials, and recommendations made by the Marketing Planning Work Group.
- Provide information on current regional TDM marketing efforts by local, state, and regional agencies to establish and coordinate continuous year round marketing for regional TDM.

**B. BIKE TO WORK DAY**

A major marketing activity is the annual Bike to Work day event. Participation in this



event has grown steadily each year and includes bicyclists from all jurisdictions in the region. This event is co-sponsored by the Washington Area Bicyclists Association (WABA) and is supported by COG/TPB staff, the state funding agencies and local jurisdictions, and individual sponsoring companies and organizations. Some of the costs of the event are off-set by business and interest-group sponsors who receive publicity for their financial support.

Commuter Connections participation in Bike to Work day includes support for the planning and promotion of the event, the maintenance and management of the event web sites, and assistance at the various “pit stops” on the day of the event, development of promotional materials and advertising, and earned media. An “Employer Challenge” is also held which identifies the top five employers with the most registered participants in the event. A drawing is then held with the five employers to select a winner. The winning employers’ registered participants receive a free lunch event sponsored by Commuter Connections.

COG/TPB staff will continue to support and implement a regional Bike To Work Day event and promote the event to employers. This will be accomplished through management and oversight of the event web site, media placements and marketing coordination activities with the marketing/advertising/public relations contractor.

**Cost Estimate:** \$170,990

***Consultant/Contractor Costs as Part of Estimate:***

<i>(Advertising and Marketing Contractor)</i>	<i>\$ 75,000</i>
<i>(Media Buy)</i>	<i>\$ 55,000</i>
<i>(Postage/Printing)</i>	<i>\$ 11,523</i>

**Products:** Earned media plan. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

Creative materials for Bike To Work Day Event which may include, but is not limited to logo update, poster, take-away brochure, transit signage, t-shirts, custom banners for each pit stop, radio ad, writing copy for live radio reads, print ad, internet ads, HTML e-mail blasts, and public service announcements. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

Regional Proclamation. *(COG/TPB staff)*

**Services:** Coordinate regional pit stops for Bike To Work Day event in May 2016. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Coordination and management of event web site  
*(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with WABA staff and*

*consultant)*

Design and distribute event collateral materials to employers and the general public. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant).*

Placement of advertisements; including, but not limited to: Web site advertisement through banner ads, placement of keyword search engine sponsorships, radio, and print, as needed. Activities include negotiation of value-added media. *(Consultant)*

Solicitation of corporate sponsors. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant).*

Media outreach and coordination of interviews. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

Coordination of Employer Challenge. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Process media placement invoices. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Management and oversight of marketing contract. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Staff regional Bike To Work Day Steering Committee. *(COG/TPB staff)*

**Schedule:** July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

**Oversight:** Bike To Work Day

- Provide input and feedback on marketing collateral materials, radio advertisements and event logistics.

## C. EMPLOYER RECOGNITION AWARDS

COG/TPB staff will coordinate the annual Commuter Connections Employer Recognition Awards for employers showing commitment towards voluntarily implementing commute alternative programs and telecommuting at their respective worksite(s). COG/TPB staff will also explore additional public relations opportunities for the award winning agencies to be profiled or highlighted. During FY 2009, a review of the program occurred and recommended changes that were adopted were implemented during FY 2010. An Employer Recognition Awards work group will continue to provide

input to the collateral material developed for the award.

Coordination activities will include developing and distributing an awards nomination packet and soliciting nominations from employers through local jurisdictions, Chambers of Commerce and from the employers themselves. Staff will also work with the marketing contractor to review and classify the award submissions. A selection committee of objective transportation industry professionals will be recruited for the awards selection committee. The selection committee will be chaired by a member of the TPB.

The marketing contractor will work with COG/TPB staff to validate nomination entries and obtain clarification needed from nominees. The marketing contractor will facilitate the selection committee process. Once the selection committee makes its recommendations, the award winners will be notified and a short video will be produced on each winning category. An awards booklet, giveaway, and short video briefs of each of the award winners will be produced for the awards ceremony. The awards ceremony will be held towards the end of the fiscal year. Staff will coordinate all logistics for the event including, but not limited to: securing speakers, writing remarks, securing event venue, and staffing the event. Additionally, COG's Office of Public Affairs along with the marketing contractor will identify media opportunities to highlight the winners.

**Cost Estimate:** \$109,127

***Consultant/Contractor Costs as Part of Estimate:***

<i>(Advertising and Marketing Contractor)</i>	<i>\$65,000</i>
<i>(Media Buy)</i>	<i>\$ 7,500</i>
<i>(Postage/Printing/Video)</i>	<i>\$20,500</i>

**Products:**

Awards nomination packet. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant).*

Awards invitations *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant).*

Awards Booklet. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant).*

Award Trophies. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Giveaway Item. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant).*

Video Briefs. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant).*

Event Photos. *(Consultant)*

	Print Ad. <i>(Consultant in conjunction with COG/TPB staff)</i>
<b>Services:</b>	<p>Coordinate award submissions with local jurisdictions. <i>(COG/TPB staff)</i></p> <p>Coordinate logistics for awards selection committee. <i>(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)</i></p> <p>Facilitate selection committee meeting <i>(Consultant)</i></p> <p>Identify and coordinate earned media opportunities. <i>(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)</i></p> <p>Placement of print ad. <i>(Consultant)</i></p> <p>Process media placement invoices. <i>(COG/TPB staff)</i></p> <p>Coordinate event logistics including recruitment of speakers, writing speaker remarks, securing event venue, and staffing the event. <i>(COG/TPB staff)</i></p> <p>Management and oversight of marketing contract. <i>(COG/TPB staff)</i></p>
<b>Schedule:</b>	July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016
<b>Oversight:</b>	<p>Commuter Connections Subcommittee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide input and feedback on project and recommendations made by Employer Recognition Awards work group.</li> </ul>

#### D. 'POOL REWARDS

During FY 2009 COG/TPB staff issued a report on the feasibility of conducting a carpool incentive demonstration project called 'Pool Rewards. The carpool incentive demonstration project was launched in FY 2010 and was evaluated in FY 2014. The purpose of the carpool incentive demonstration project was to recruit and retain commuters in a carpool through cash or other incentives. Similar programs are in operation in major metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles and Atlanta. Research has shown that commuters who are paid to carpool tend to stay in a carpooling arrangement longer than those carpoolers who are not paid. Commuters who currently take transit or a vanpool to work are eligible to receive \$130 per month under the IRS Qualified Transportation Fringe

benefit provisions. Carpoolers are not eligible to participate. This type of a program has been used in a limited fashion in the Washington metropolitan region during large-scale construction projects such as the Wilson Bridge where the program was named “Bridge Bucks.” The program proved to be extremely successful in convincing commuters to use an alternative form of transportation other than driving alone during the construction period.

During FY 2009, a demonstration program began operations in the following corridors: 1) I-495 from Bethesda to Tyson’s Corner, 2) I-495 from MD-295 (BW Parkway) to I-270; and 3) I-395 from Washington DC into Northern Virginia. The program guidelines and implementation plans for each of these corridors were developed by a work group in FY 2009 and were deployed as part of the pilot project. The duration of the financial incentive for the three recommended corridors was for three months for participating commuters. During the course of the demonstration project in FY 2010, the corridor restrictions were lifted in March 2010 due to low participation rates.

An evaluation report was developed under the guidance of the State TDM Work Group and the TDM Evaluation Group. Based on the demonstration project results, the STDM Work Group determined the program’s continuation beginning in FY 2011 along with changes to program guidelines and the ‘Pool Rewards software module. After measuring the benefits produced from the carpool financial incentive program, comparisons were made from the expected outcomes to the actual outcomes in terms of auto occupancy and vehicle miles of travel, vehicle trips reduced and emission impacts. A follow-up survey conducted in FY 2011 of the original demonstration project participants showed a 93% carpool retention rate of all participants. A survey of new participants was conducted in FY 2011 and showed that 98% of the program participants planned to carpool after the incentive had ended. A survey of all program participants that had completed the program and were paid was conducted in FY 2014 and results showed a 55% carpool/vanpool retention rate. Continued evaluation will be conducted in order to adjust program guidelines and documentation of program participation from the user’s end. Results from the FY 2014 survey were used to adjust the program budget.

The current carpool incentive allows each participating carpooler to earn up to \$130 over a 90 day time frame through a trip-tracking process. In FY 2012 the ‘Pool Rewards program was expanded to include vanpools. Newly formed vanpools that originate in either the District of Columbia or in Maryland whose destination is in the Washington DC non-attainment region will be eligible to participate. Third-party vanpool providers on contract with COG/TPB provide the vanpool service and each of the ‘Pool Rewards eligible vanpools receive an on-going \$200 per month incentive. COG/TPB staff worked with WMATA to develop a monthly mileage reporting system for the Federal Transit Administration’s (FTA’s) National Transit Database. There will also be continued coordination with Virginia’s new incentive vanpool program.

In FY 2016, advertising materials will be updated along with on-line advertising as a way to entice additional project participants.

**Cost Estimate:**

**\$170,225**

**Consultant/Incentive Costs as Part of Estimate:**

(Advertising and Marketing Contractor)	\$ 20,000
(Media Buy)	\$ 50,000
(Pool Rewards Incentive Payments)	\$15,000 (carpools)
	\$45,000 (vanpools)

<b>Products:</b>	Marketing materials. <i>(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)</i>
<b>Services:</b>	Operation of 'Pool Rewards program which includes registering and verifying participants, monitoring trip logs, supervisor verification, and payments to program participants. <i>(COG/TPB staff)</i>
	Media Placements. <i>(Consultant)</i>
	Process media placement invoices. <i>(COG/TPB staff)</i>
	Management and oversight of marketing contract. <i>(COG/TPB staff)</i>
<b>Schedule:</b>	July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016
<b>Oversight:</b>	Commuter Connections Subcommittee <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide input and feedback on project recommendations for program continuation and/or expansion.</li></ul>

**E. CAR-FREE DAY**

During FY 2015, COG/TPB staff will coordinate with local jurisdictions to implement the regional Car Free Day campaign that will encourage residents to leave their cars behind or to take alternative forms of transportation such as public transit, carpools, vanpools, telework, bicycling or walking.

Car Free Day was first held in FY 2009. In FY 2012, evaluation results showed that there were over 11,700 individuals that pledged to go "car-free" for this event, a 70% increase over the previous year. In addition, there were approximately 5,500 vehicle trips reduced and 272,000 vehicle miles of travel reduced as a result of participation in this event. During FY 2013, the event was held on a Saturday and the participation rate was about half of that in FY 2012 (6,572 pledges). In FY 2014, the event date fell on a Sunday; however the region expanded the event to Car Free Days to include Friday and Saturday; however the participation rate fell sharply to 4,168. In FY 2015, pledges climbed back up to 4,656, a 13% increase over FY 2014.

This event will be held on September 22<sup>nd</sup> and is in tandem with the World Car Free Day event. In FY 2016, the event will fall on a weekday which should attract additional participation. A marketing campaign along with public outreach efforts will be developed to coincide with this worldwide celebrated event.

<b>Cost Estimate:</b>	\$99,825
<b><i>Consultant/Contractor Costs as Part of Estimate:</i></b>	
<i>(Advertising and Marketing Contractor)</i>	\$ 30,000
<i>(Media Buy)</i>	\$ 45,000
<i>(Postage/Printing)</i>	\$ 16,250

**Products:** Marketing collateral which can include, but is not limited to development and printing of posters, transit signage, bus shelter signage and other related advertising collateral that will need to be printed.  
*(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

Development and production of radio ad, internet ads, and text messages, and HTML e-mail blasts.  
*(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

Earned media plan development and implementation.  
*(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

Update of Web site and social media. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant)*

**Services:** Implement regional Car Free Day event prior to and after Monday, September 22, 2015 and promote event to the general public, employers and to the media. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant )*.

Media Placements, including the negotiation of value-added placements. *(Consultant)*

Process media placement invoices. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Staff regional Car Free Day Steering Committee.  
*(COG/TPB staff)*

Management and oversight of marketing contract.  
*(COG/TPB staff)*

**Schedule:** July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

**Oversight:****Car Free Day Steering Committee**

- Provide input and feedback on marketing collateral materials, radio advertisements and event logistics.

#### **IV. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The Monitoring and Evaluation program will provide overall program and individual project results when appropriate for the various projects in the CCWP that will be used to track progress for the regionally adopted Transportation Emission Reduction Measures (TERMS). One project will solely focus on those activities directly related to data collection and analysis for the TERMS. Data collection and analysis for the TERMS occurs over a three year period. Results from this project will directly impact the FY 2015 – FY 2017 TERM Analysis report for Commuter Connections and the final results will be used to update the regional TERM Tracking Sheet. Cost effectiveness results are also calculated every three years. Impact and cost effectiveness results will also be used by the State TDM Work Group to make any necessary recommendations for changes to the TERMS being operated through Commuter Connections.

The second project area will include the ongoing tracking and monitoring activities for each of the CCWP program areas, including the Commuter Operations Center, Guaranteed Ride Home, Employer Outreach, and Marketing. A direct customer satisfaction survey will be performed to gauge the level of satisfaction for Guaranteed Ride Home. Monthly data collection and quarterly progress reports and an annual progress report will also be produced by COG/TPB staff.

The Monitoring and Evaluation program is a regional program and consists of the two project areas outlined below. The total annual project cost for the program tasks is \$868,000.

##### **A. TERM DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

Data collection analysis for the Commuter Connections TERMS occurs over a three year period. The current cycle began in FY 2015 (July 1, 2014) and will conclude in FY 2017 (June 30, 2017). During FY 2015, the previous data collection cycle's TERM Analysis Report was finalized and published and the Placement Rate Study for the new data collection period was completed. In FY 2016, the Framework Methodology Document will be updated and published, and data collection activities will occur for the 2016 State of the Commute Report and 2016 GRH Applicant Survey. Draft Technical reports will be produced for both data collection activities. Retention rate surveys will also be conducted for Commuter Connections applicants and Guaranteed Ride Home applicants. During FY 2017, the final year in the data collection cycle, COG/TPB staff will conduct an evaluation of the regional Employer Outreach database as specified in the FY 2015–2017 TDM Evaluation Framework Methodology Document. An employer telework survey will also be conducted to gauge the effectiveness of assistance provided to employers to start and expand a telework program in Maryland. A Bike To Work Day survey of the FY 2016 program participants will be conducted and the 2016



State of the Commute Survey Technical Report will be finalized and a general public report will be prepared for printing. The 2016 Guaranteed Ride Home Applicant Survey Report will be finalized. The draft FY 2017 TERM Analysis report will also be prepared and a Retention Rate survey will be conducted as part of the Applicant Placement Rate Study..

During FY 2016, COG/TPB staff will work to update the FY 2015–FY 2017 TDM Evaluation Framework Methodology document. The TDM Evaluation Framework Methodology document is used as the “blueprint” in data collection activities for the three year Commuter Connections TERM Evaluation cycle and also provides the methodology used to calculate Commuter Connections program benefits. Updating this document will also provide an opportunity to re-visit program goals for each of the Commuter Connections TERMS relevant to recent impact and cost effectiveness data released in the FY 2012-FY2015 TERM Analysis report.

The 2016 State of the Commute Survey will also be designed and implemented as it is conducted every three years. The purpose of the State of the Commute report is to document trends in commuting behavior, such as commute mode shares and distance traveled, and prevalent attitudes about specific transportation services, such as public transportation, that are available in the region. The State of the Commute Survey is also used to help estimate the congestion and air quality impacts of Commuter Connections. The survey instrument used for data collection activities will be reviewed and updated accordingly, data collection activities will occur and a draft Technical Report will be produced. Results from the survey will be used in the FY 2015–2017 TERM Analysis report and will then be incorporated into the TPB’s regional TERM report.

COG/TPB staff will also be updating the survey instrument design for the in-depth Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Applicant survey. This survey is conducted every three years to assess the mode shift changes of 1,000 GRH program applicants. Data collected will be used to determine transportation and emission impacts of the program in the FY 2015–FY 2017 TERM Analysis Report. A survey report will be prepared and released by June 2016.

Retention rate surveys will also be conducted for Commuter Connections program applicants and Guaranteed Ride Home program applicants. The purpose of these two new surveys will be to document the retention rates of alternative mode use as a result of contacting Commuter Connections for program services. Respondents from the previous Applicant Placement Rate Study’s conducted in FY 2012 and FY 2015 will be re-contacted to ascertain whether or not they are still using alternative modes. Guaranteed Ride Home applicant survey respondents from the FY 2013 survey will also be conducted to determine their continued use of alternative modes.

Various presentations on the data collection instruments and reports will be prepared and given to the Commuter Connections TDM Evaluation Group, the Commuter Connections Subcommittee, the TPB Technical Committee, and the TPB, if warranted. The evaluation contractor will also be fulfilling data requests that are received or needed

by COG/TPB staff during the course of the fiscal year.

COG/TPB staff will also provide day to day management and monitoring of evaluation contract services and will report results through monthly data collection activities and quarterly progress reports and an annual progress report.

During FY 2016, data collection activities from local sales territories will continue as will the review of employer database records and the classification of employer records into levels of participation. Quarterly level of effort verification statements will be produced by COG/TPB staff.

**Cost Estimate:** **\$623,890**

***Consultant Costs as Part of Estimate:***  
*(TDM Evaluation Project Consultant)* **\$464,500**

**Products:** FY 2015- FY 2017 TDM Evaluation Framework Methodology Document. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant).*

2016 State of the Commute Survey design and data collection activities. *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant).*

2016 State of the Commute draft Technical Report.  
*(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant).*

2016 GRH In-Depth Applicant Survey and draft report.  
*(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant).*

2016 Commuter Connections Applicant Retention Rate Survey design and data collection activities *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant).*

2016 Guaranteed Ride Home Applicant Retention Rate Survey design and data collection activities *(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant).*

Quarterly level of effort Employer Outreach TERM verification statements. *(COG/TPB Staff)*

**Services:** Fulfillment of data requests. *(COG TPB Staff)*

Data documentation from monthly activity reports from ten local sales territories. *(COG TPB Staff)*

Management and oversight of TDM Evaluation contract.  
*(COG/TPB staff)*

**Schedule:** July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

FY 2015 – FY 2017 TDM Evaluation Framework  
Methodology Document: December 2015

2016 State of the Commute Survey Draft Technical Report:  
June 2016

2016 In-Depth GRH Applicant Draft Survey Report: June  
2016

2016 Commuter Connections Applicant Retention Rate Draft  
Survey Report: June 2016

2016 Guaranteed Ride Home Applicant Retention Rate Draft  
Survey Report: June 2016

**Oversight:** TDM Evaluation Group

- Provide input and feedback on data collection activities, survey methodology, and draft reports.

**B. PROGRAM MONITORING AND TRACKING ACTIVITIES**

COG/TPB staff will collect monthly program statistics, produce quarterly progress reports, monthly Executive Summary reports, and produce a FY 2015 annual summary of program statistics of the number and type of commuter traveler requests filled by COG and other client member program sites. Staff will collect and analyze data from the monthly customer satisfaction survey for all GRH program users, and produce a customer satisfaction survey report based on the findings. Survey results will be used to change program guidelines and/or policies as needed.

COG/TPB staff will assist local Employer Outreach sales representatives to conduct employer site surveys. A contractor will be used to provide technical assistance for the electronic surveying process and analysis of results, and data entry assistance for those employers using a paper copy of the survey. Survey tabulation and reporting will be provided by COG/TPB staff. Results from the employer database tabulated surveys are used to estimate the participation rates and impacts for employer-based TDM programs reported from the local sales jurisdictions. COG/TPB staff will also maintain and update the archived Employer Commute Survey database.

COG/TPB staff will also monitor monthly progress for local Employer Outreach sales jurisdictions based on their approved Scopes of Work and contract project goals.

Quarterly progress reports and level of effort tracking sheets listing results of each local sales jurisdiction will be prepared. An annual detailed snapshot of overall progress will be provided to appropriate state funding agencies for their respective jurisdictions.

COG/TPB staff will conduct the annual Employer Customer Satisfaction Survey and report.

COG/TPB staff will oversee a regional monitoring and evaluation program for Employer Outreach which includes data collection activities from local employer outreach sales territories. Local jurisdiction contract performance monitoring for Employer Outreach goals will also be a part of this activity.

Results from local employer telework sales calls and outreach services will be documented in terms of level of effort and progress and shown in quarterly progress reports. Quarterly documentation will also be provided on level of participation and effectiveness and results from sales and outreach activities for employer-based telework programs. Overall monitoring and evaluating employer-based telework programs throughout the region will continue.

Staff will also evaluate effectiveness of advertising campaigns through call volumes, internet hits, and the annual placement rate study. Marketing campaigns will be monitored through lead analysis and detailed campaign summary results. An event summary report will also be produced for the FY 2015 regional Bike To Work Day event.

Monthly program statistics will be collected and quarterly progress reports will be provided for all program areas in the FY 2016 CCWP and an annual progress report for FY 2015 will be produced.

<b>Cost Estimate:</b>	<b>\$244,110</b>
<b><i>Consultant Costs as Part of Estimate:</i></b>	
<i>(Employer Survey Project Consultant)</i>	<b>\$ 30,000</b>

<b>Products:</b>	Collect monthly program data and produce quarterly progress reports and monthly Executive Summary reports for the Commuter Operations Center, Guaranteed Ride Home, Employer Outreach, Marketing, Evaluation, and GRH Baltimore programs. <i>(COG/TPB staff)</i>
	Produce FY 2015 annual progress report. <i>(COG/TPB staff)</i>
	Collect and analyze data from monthly GRH customer satisfaction survey for FY 2015 program users, and produce a report showing results. <i>(COG/TPB staff)</i>

Quarterly Employer Outreach verification report.  
(COG/TPB staff)

Marketing lead analysis and campaign summary  
report. (COG/TPB staff)

FY 2015 Bike to Work Day Event Report (COG/TPB  
staff)

Survey reports to Employer Outreach representatives  
from Employer Commute Survey results. (COG/TPB  
staff)

**Services:**

Updating and Maintaining Employer Commute Survey  
archived database. (COG/TPB staff)

Management and oversight of Employer Survey  
contract. (COG/TPB staff)

Staff the TDM Evaluation Group (COG/TPB staff)

**Schedule:**

July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

FY 2015 4<sup>th</sup> Quarterly Progress Report: July 2015

FY 2015 Marketing Campaign Lead Analysis and  
Results: September 2015

FY 2015 Annual Progress Report: September 2015

FY 2016 1st Quarter Progress Report: October 2015

FY 2016 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Progress Report: January 2016

FY 2016 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Progress Report: April 2016

FY 2016 Marketing Campaign Lead Analysis and  
Results: March 2016

**Oversight:**

Commuter Connections Subcommittee

- Provide input and feedback on data collection activities for GRH customer satisfaction survey, monthly, quarterly, and annual progress reports.

Regional TDM Marketing Group

- Provide input and feedback on campaign lead analysis reports.

#### Employer Outreach Committee

- Provide input and feedback on quarterly employer outreach verification reports and Employer commute survey process, reports and survey result archives.

## V. EMPLOYER OUTREACH

The Employer Outreach program provides and supports outreach efforts in ten jurisdictions located in the region's MSA. This program contains regional and jurisdictional components. COG/TPB's Commuter Connections staff provides overall administration and arranges for sales training and support for the jurisdictional components of the program and technical training on the regional sales contact management database. The local jurisdictions provide outreach to employers and work with employers to develop and implement new, or expand existing employer-based alternative commute programs.

The following local jurisdictions provide employer outreach services:

District of Columbia
Frederick County
Montgomery County
Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland
Prince George's County
City of Alexandria
Arlington County
Fairfax County
Loudoun County
Prince William County

Most employers who promote commute alternatives do so for practical reasons associated with the operation of their businesses. But the community as a whole benefits from commute alternatives programs, which improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion, and support economic development. For this reason, many local governments in the region continue to offer programs that encourage commute options at the employment site. These programs range from marketing efforts and incentive programs conducted through ridesharing programs to "adequate public facilities ordinances" that have trip reduction requirements for affected employers. Additionally, the Virginia Department of Transportation administers funds directly to the local jurisdictions in Northern Virginia to implement the Employer Outreach TERM and has also allocated funding to the Telework!VA program for employers to either start or expand a telework program. The District Department of Transportation is using the pass-thru dollars for the TERM to hire a contractor directly. Results from these activities are reported and

analyzed under the regional Monitoring and Evaluation program.

The Commuter Connections program's ongoing goal has been to weave existing local employer and government programs into a coherent, voluntary regional network, and to promote ways in which worksite commute alternatives programs may grow, without imposing burdensome mandates upon employers.

Regional Components of the Employer Outreach Program include:

- 1) Maintaining and updating a web-based regional employer/employee sales contact database to facilitate local efforts and avoid duplication.
- 2) Coordination with WMATA's SmartBenefits program sales staff, and/or their assigned consultant(s).
- 3) Review of individual local sales contact databases on a continuing basis to ensure quality control.
- 4) Providing bicycling information to area employers to help and support bicycling to work by their employees.
- 5) Coordinating technical training for the regional sales database on an as needed basis.
- 6) Supporting the Employer Outreach Committee of the Commuter Connections Subcommittee which provides guidance to the program.
- 7) COG/TPB staff support for updating and printing customized sales materials and employer case studies both in hard copy and for inclusion on the Commuter Connections Web site.
- 8) Providing coordinated marketing materials for the program including; but not limited to, customized sales portfolio's, employer case studies, Live Near Your Work, Alternative Work Schedule, Climate Change Carbon Footprint, LEED, and Emergency Commute Preparedness information.
- 9) Providing customized information on voluntary commuting actions that can be taken by employers and the general public to reduce mobile source emissions, particularly on Air Quality Action days, through the Clean Air Partners program.
- 10) Offering sales training for the sales and service representatives in each of the participating jurisdictions.

The regional components of the program are listed in the two project tasks below. The total annual cost for the regional components of the Employer Outreach program is \$84,725.

Jurisdictional Components of the Employer Outreach Program include:

- 1) Contacting individual employers in each locality, (carried out by the local sales and service representatives) through the regional contact sales database which Commuter Connections maintains and updates.
- 2) Accomplishing local program goals in Maryland jurisdictions via staff, contractors, TMA's, or other entities. A scope of work is submitted to COG to expedite an annual program contract for each locality, and funding is allocated to localities based upon guidance to COG from the state funding agencies.
- 3) COG/TPB support for overseeing pass-thru funding to local sales jurisdictions for the implementation of voluntary transportation demand management strategies at private sector employment sites.
- 4) Providing sales support for the sales and service representatives in DC and Maryland.

The jurisdictional components of the program are outlined in the two project tasks below. The total annual costs for the jurisdictional components of the Employer Outreach program are \$567,553.

### **Regional Component Project Tasks**

#### **A. REGIONAL EMPLOYER DATABASE MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING**

During FY 2016, COG/TPB staff will continue to maintain and update the hardware and software for the computerized regional employer outreach database and monitor the regional web-based database upgrade installed during FY 2015. In addition, COG/TPB staff will coordinate training and provide technical assistance to local sales jurisdictions upon request.

**Cost Estimate:** \$69,725

**Services:** Management and monitoring of Employer Outreach regional database and provision of sales representative database training as needed.  
(COG/TPB staff)

Maintenance and update of regional contact management database. (COG/TPB staff)

**Schedule:** July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

**Oversight:** Employer Outreach Committee

- Provide input and feedback on technical issues regarding the regional Employer Outreach database.



## B. EMPLOYER OUTREACH FOR BICYCLING

The Employer Outreach for Bicycling program provides information to area employers to help support and encourage bicycling to work by their employees. This information is included in the Employer Outreach materials provided to employers under the Employer Outreach Program.

Specific activities under the Employer Outreach for Bicycling Program include the update of a guide on biking to work ("Biking to Work in the Washington Area: A Guide for Employers and Employees), and incorporation of WABA bike mentors into the ridematching database. (WABA's Web site now provides users with 24-hour matching to WABA bike mentors, automating a service that previously consumed considerable staff time, and which was available only during office hours).

COG/TPB staff also provides support and facilitation for other bike-to-work outreach activities including lunch time seminars, association meetings and strategic mailings.

**Cost Estimate:** \$15,000

**Printing as Part of Estimate**      **\$7,355**

**Products:** Regional Bicycling to Work Guide updates.  
(COG/TPB staff)

**Services:** Employer assistance and seminars. (COG/TPB staff)

**Schedule:** July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

**Oversight:** Employer Outreach Committee

- Provide input and feedback on bicycling issues or outreach activities at employment sites.

## Jurisdictional Component Project Tasks

### A. MARYLAND LOCAL AGENCY FUNDING AND SUPPORT

Local jurisdictions work with employers to develop and implement new, or expand existing employer-based commuter benefit programs such as transit and vanpool benefits, preferential parking for carpools and vanpools, carpool and vanpool formation, and telework and flexible work schedules. Results from these efforts are recorded in the regional employer database.

Maryland jurisdictions will also provide general telework information to the general public, local agencies, and employers. Employer Outreach representatives will also work with employers in Maryland to establish new or expand existing telework programs.

<b>Cost Estimate:</b>	Pass-thru to Local Jurisdictions:	\$383,167
<b>Telework component of pass-thru:</b>		\$81,063

<b>Total Project Budget:</b>	<b>\$464,230</b>
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<b>Services:</b>	New or expanded employer-based TDM programs in Maryland. <i>(local jurisdictions).</i>
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	New or expanded employer telework programs in Maryland. <i>(local jurisdictions).</i>
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<b>Schedule:</b>	July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016
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#### **B. DC, MARYLAND, AND VIRGINIA PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

This project task includes the management and monitoring of pass-thru funding by COG/TPB staff to local sales jurisdictions in DC and Maryland for contract compliance. It also includes support to DC and Maryland jurisdictions, consultants, or TMA staff in implementing voluntary transportation demand management strategies at private and/or non-profit sector employment sites. This task involves the review and approval of an annual Scope of Work by COG/TPB staff for each of the Maryland sales jurisdictions and day to day contract management. This task also includes COG/TPB staff support for updating and printing employer specific regional employer-based marketing materials as well as providing training opportunities.

<b>Cost Estimate:</b>	\$103,323
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<b>Products:</b>	Electronic and printed updates of customized sales portfolio materials, employer specific regional marketing materials (General Commuter Connections brochure, Alternative Work Schedules brochure, Emergency Commute Preparedness brochure, Live Near Your Work brochure, LEED brochure, Climate Change brochure), and case studies for DC, Maryland and Virginia. <i>(COG/TPB staff)</i>
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<b>Services:</b>	Sales training offered for sales and service representatives in the region for DC, Maryland and
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Virginia. (COG/TPB staff/sales training professionals).

Oversight to local sales jurisdictions in DC and Maryland to implement voluntary transportation demand management strategies at private sector employment sites. (COG/TPB staff)

Bi-annual sales support conference calls to DC and Maryland jurisdictions. Employer site visits by COG/TPB staff as requested or needed by DC and Maryland jurisdictions. (COG/TPB staff)

Staff the regional Employer Outreach Committee for DC, Maryland and Virginia. (COG/TPB staff)

**Schedule:** July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

**Oversight:** Employer Outreach Committee

- Provide input and feedback on administrative items such as training, employer-based collateral materials, and case studies.

## **VI. GUARANTEED RIDE HOME BALTIMORE**

A regional Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) program was implemented in the Baltimore metropolitan region and in St. Mary's County beginning in FY 2011. The GRH Baltimore program will help to eliminate a major barrier to using transit, carpooling, vanpooling, bicycling or walking to work. Studies have shown that a commuter's fear of being "stranded" at work if they or a family member become ill, or if they must work unexpected overtime, is one of the most compelling reasons commuters do not rideshare or use transit to travel to work. The GRH Baltimore program eliminates this barrier by providing a free ride home in the event of an unexpected personal emergency or unscheduled overtime.

The GRH Baltimore is similar to the Washington metropolitan region's GRH program in offering a free ride home to commuters that carpool, vanpool, use transit, bicycle, or walk to work at least two days per work week. As a result of the GRH program, some single occupant vehicle drivers will switch to a ridesharing or transit commuting alternatives, and current ridesharing and transit users will increase the usage of these alternative commute modes. The program will be able to demonstrate both transportation and emission impacts that could be used as part of the Baltimore region's air quality conformity process. The GRH program is an insurance program for those commuters who do not drive alone to their worksite.

The budget for the Guaranteed Ride Home program includes two projects outlined below, and with a budget of \$170,000.

A. GENERAL OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

Commuter Connections staff at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) will process all GRH applications received by mail, fax, and the Commuter Connections Web site. Using the GRH software system, COG registers qualifying applicants, produces GRH registration ID cards, and sends ID card and participation guidelines to new registrants. Commuters can obtain information about the GRH program and complete an application on the Commuter Connections Web site, [www.commuterconnections.org](http://www.commuterconnections.org). Commuters may also call COG's Commuter Connections 800 telephone number, 1-800-745-RIDE, to ask questions about the GRH program and/or request information and an application. The 800 number is equipped with a menu so that callers can choose the menu item that best fits their needs. All GRH questions and requests for information and applications are taken by COG/TPB staff.

COG staff also mails GRH applications to GRH users who have used the GRH program without formally registering. GRH guidelines permit a commuter to use the GRH service one time as a "one-time exception" before they register. Also, COG staff mails transit vouchers to GRH users who used transit as part of their GRH trip. All vouchers and invoices from transportation service providers are processed by COG staff.

In the event the commuter has not supplied their e-mail address, COG/TPB staff mails a re-registration notice to commuters who could not be contacted by telephone. The notice contains an application which the commuter can complete and send to COG to re-register. The commuter can also call Commuter Connections or visit the Commuter Connections Web site to re-register.

COG/TPB staff will assist the Commuter Connections Subcommittee in reviewing the GRH participation guidelines for any recommended changes. These recommendations will be presented to the Commuter Connections Subcommittee for their final review and approval. In the past, recommendations have been made to modify and add participation guidelines to better convey the GRH trip authorization, GRH re-registration, and one-time exception rules and restrictions.

COG/TPB staff will respond to the general public and to GRH applicants for registrations and re-registrations to the program. Registered commuters will be notified when their GRH registration is about to expire. Staff will continue to prepare and send new and re-registration GRH ID cards, registration letters, and participation guidelines on a weekly basis. Staff will also continue to monitor and maintain the GRH applicant database and server. COG/TPB staff will continue to update and maintain program participation guidelines, and provide annual customer service training to the daily operations contractor and COG/TPB staff assigned to the project.

During FY 2016, data collection activities will continue for a GRH Baltimore Customer satisfaction survey. The purpose of the survey will be to gauge the level of satisfaction from those who have used the program. A report will be developed and finalized from

the FY 2015 data collected.

In addition, COG/TPB staff will also be updating the survey instrument design for the in-depth Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH) Baltimore Region and St. Mary's County Applicant survey. This survey is conducted every three years to assess the mode shift changes of GRH program applicants. Data collected will be used to determine transportation and emission impacts of the program. A survey report will be prepared and released by June 2016.

**Cost Estimate:** **\$56,427**

**Consultant Costs as Part of Estimate:**  
(TDM Evaluation Project Consultant) **\$17,500**

**Direct Costs (Telephone, Copies, etc) as part Of Estimate:** **\$ 3,465**

**Products:** GRH new and re-registration ID cards and registration letters  
(COG/TPB staff)  
  
GRH Participation Guidelines (COG/TPB Staff)  
  
Final 2015 GRH Customer Satisfaction Survey Report. (COG/TPB staff).  
  
2016 GRH Baltimore In-Depth Applicant Survey and draft report.  
(COG/TPB staff in conjunction with consultant).

**Services:** Process application requests from the general public for registration and re-registration to the program. (COG/TPB Staff)  
  
Notify commuters when registration is about to expire. (COG/TPB staff)  
  
Monitor and update GRH applicant database. (COG/TPB staff)

**Schedule:** July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016  
  
2015 GRH Customer Satisfaction Survey Report: November 2015  
  
2016 In-Depth GRH Baltimore Applicant Draft Survey Report: June 2016

**Oversight:** Commuter Connections Subcommittee

- Provide input and feedback on GRH program participation guidelines and policies.

## B. PROCESS TRIP REQUESTS AND PROVIDE TRIPS

GRH transportation service will be provided by several taxi companies, a rental car company, and a paratransit company, all under contract with COG. Commuters make their GRH trip request through a menu option provided on COG's Commuter Connections 800 telephone number. This menu option transfers calls for GRH trips directly to an operations contractor. This contractor reviews and assesses the trip request and approves or denies the request based on the GRH Participation Guidelines. The contractor then arranges the approved trips with the appropriate transportation contractor.

The operations contractor contacts, by telephone, GRH registrants without e-mail addresses whose registration is near expiration and re-registers the qualifying commuters. While the system of calling commuters has been successful, many messages left on commuters' voice mail are not returned. In such cases, re-registration is facilitated by COG staff as described in the previous section.

COG/TPB staff will continue management and monitoring of contract services for day-to-day operations services. Day to day operations include confirming ride request eligibility, dispatching rides through the ride service providers, tracking ride requests in the GRH database, processing invoices for payment for ride service providers, the daily operations contractor and for the general public for transit vouchers.

Customer service training will be provided to all Guaranteed Ride Home call center agents.

**Cost Estimate:** **\$113,573**

***Consultant/ Contractor Costs as Part of Estimate:***

(Daily Operations):	\$41,500
(Cab and Car Rental Companies)	\$59,187

**Services:** Process GRH trip requests, approve/deny requests, and arrange rides. *(Daily Operations Contractor)*

Management and monitoring of contract services for day-to-day operations, and ride service providers. This includes processing invoices for payment for contractors and for the general public for transit vouchers. *(COG/TPB staff)*

Provide GRH Rides (*Cab and Car rental Companies*)

**Schedule:** July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016

**Oversight:** Commuter Connections Subcommittee

- Provide input and feedback on GRH program participation guidelines and policies.