TO:	City of Madison Transit & Parking Commission
FROM:	Crystal Martin, Paratransit Program Manager
SUBJECT:	**METRO PARATRANSIT PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT**
DATE:	6/20/06

Metro Transit's paratransit Program (Metro Plus) provides paratransit services as a complement to the fixed-route bus service. Individuals with disabilities who cannot access the fixed-route system because of their disability are eligible for paratransit with Metro. Although performance reports are provided monthly, this annual report is intended as a review of the program's progress. Topics addressed in this report include performance indicators, ADA service standards, ADA Transit Subcommittee to the Transit & Parking Commission actions, community outreach activities, contract status and vendors, and Trapeze Software optimization. Also, changes in program monitoring that began in late 2005 will be introduced. The report concludes with Metro's activities in response to the recommendations by the WisDOT Management Audit of 2004.

ADA Service Standards

The paratransit program has several components that must be compliant with federal regulations. Those include: eligibility process, service area, response time, fares, days and hours of service, no prioritizing trip purpose, and no capacity constraints. This report is limited to the dynamic areas of eligibility, service area, and capacity constraints.

Capacity Constraints

On Time Performance   One method of measuring capacity constraints is whether the system is delivering service on-time. A pattern of late service indicates that the system needs more capacity. Rides are either: early, on-time, or late. Early rides are rides for which the service vehicle arrives any one minute before the requested pick up time. On-time rides are rides for which the service vehicle arrives either at the requested pick up time, or up to 20 minutes after the requested pick up time. Late rides are those that the service vehicle arrives after 20 minutes from the requested pick up time.

In previous years, Metro supervisors observed all providers performing service and captured on-time performance data. Typically, a little less than 1% of the paratransit trips were directly observed. During 2005, Metro transitioned from directly observed trip performance of 1% of the service to electronic reporting of 100% of the service.
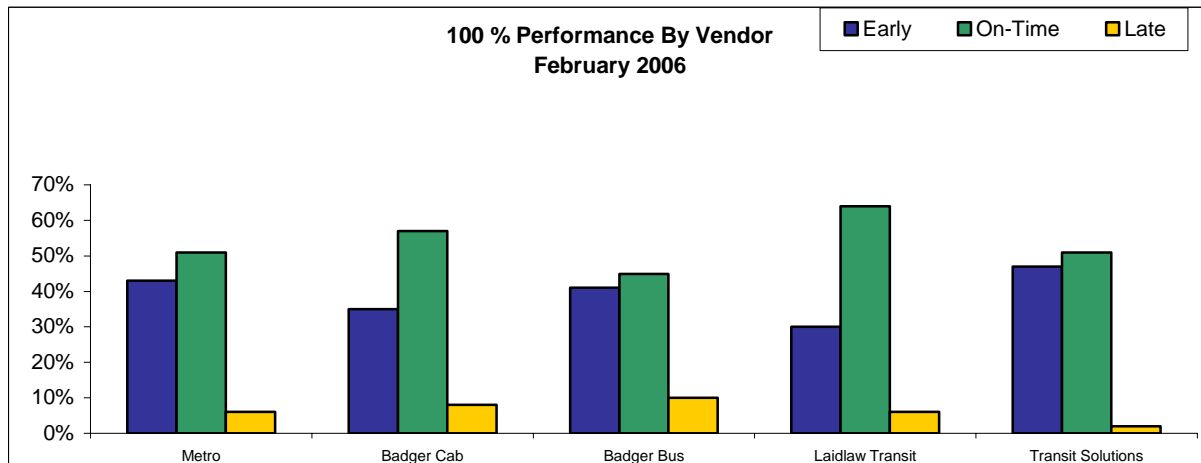
Metro's paratransit vendors began reporting completed trip data electronically in January 2006. Vendor supplied data is compared to passenger late trip reports and supervisor observation for accuracy. Metro's directly operated paratransit fleet is equipped with global positioning satellite (GPS) reporting and mobile data terminals (MDTs) to record and report data for each trip assigned. Typical reporting from the observed trip method indicated 3% of trips were late. Preliminary data from the second full month of electronic reporting indicated that roughly 6% of total trips were late. Metro is now able to compare customer reports of late trips to the data provided by vendors.

Systematic tracking of customer Late Reports and complaints began July 1, 2001. Late ride reports are based on notification from Metro customers that they have waited longer than 20 minutes from their requested pick up time for the service vehicle to arrive. Typically, this data is generated by customer phone calls to the Customer Service Center. The chart below represents all data collected for Late Ride reports. For 2005, Metro recorded 1405 Late Ride reports from paratransit customers. That represents **.**5% of the performed rides compared to **.**8% for 2004.

Phone System Capacity Another area Metro monitors is the Customer Service Center and capacity of the phone lines to accommodate customers attempting to make trip requests. The Federal Transit Administration views this as an area where transit systems may limit capacity by limiting customers' ability to request a trip. Metro's Customer Service Center serves all modes and its performance is charted below.
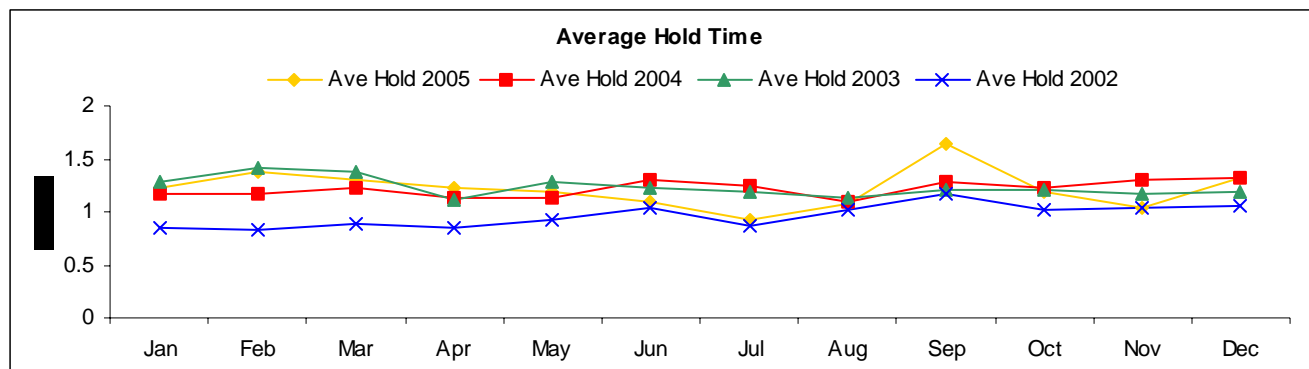
In 2005, 4.3% more calls were answered and wait time remained about the same over all. The number of abandoned calls dropped 40% from 2004. Customer Service Representatives continue to participate in meetings to discuss timely policy and operational questions or clarifications about issues raised by customers.

Eligibility Process Metro processes on average 35 new applications each month. Each applicant is notified of their determination within 21 days of receipt of a completed application. The information provided on some applications is not sufficient to make a determination without an in-person functional assessment. Metro contracted with Concentra Medical Centers to perform these in-person assessments. Customers may request an application by calling the Customer Service Center or downloading it from Metro's website.

Every three years, Metro re-certifies each customer to maintain current information and eligibility. Metro completed a re-certification year in 2004. The next re-certification year will be in 2007.

Service Area   In March 2006, Metro completed an annual audit of ride bookings for the paratransit service area. The check indicated that all trips were compliant with Metro's boundary area. Customers frequently call Customer Service to ask about specific destinations and whether they fall within or outside of the service area. Maps of the service area are posted on Metro's website. These include differing areas for weekday, weekend, and holiday schedules as derived from the fixed-route service variations.

Performance Indicators

The TPC receives monthly reports on fixed-route and paratransit performance indicators. These include quantitative measures of the program's effectiveness in delivering required services. Breakouts of the contracted services are included. Metro coordinates approximately 20,000 trips per month for people with disabilities. In 2005, ADA ridership grew by over 23,324 trips, 9.8%. This is compared to growth of 3.8% the previous year.
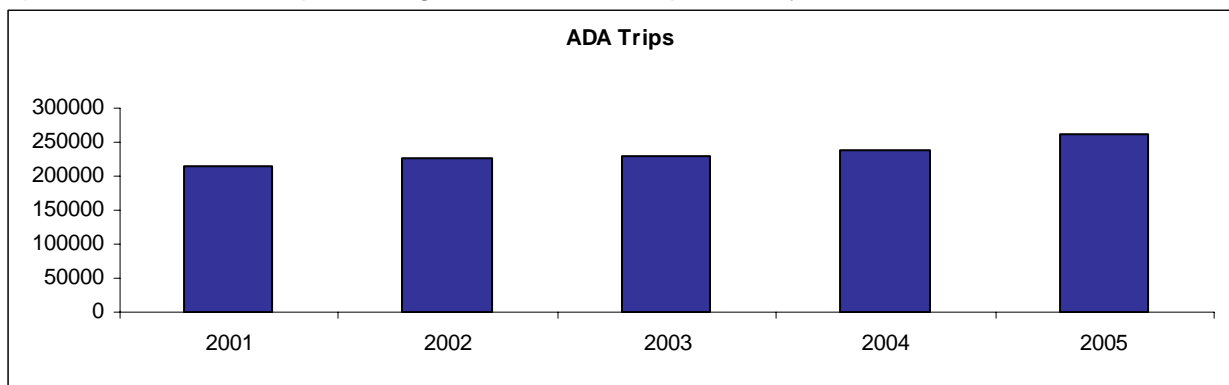

The number of unduplicated persons who requested paratransit trips decreased by 3 individuals in 2005. Meanwhile, the average trips per customer increased to 163 trips compared to 149 in 2004.

When breaking out the service requests by those requesting accessible vehicles (wheelchair space requests) and those that can be accommodated by sedans (ambulatory), the trend of higher ambulatory demand continues while total requests for wheelchair accessible trips also increased. Ambulatory trip requests were up 12.8% while wheelchair space requests were up another 4.2% after an increase last year of 5.4%. Demand for both wheelchair and ambulatory space types continue to have seasonal changes in demand patterns. The spring and fall seasons tend to be peak demand times of year.
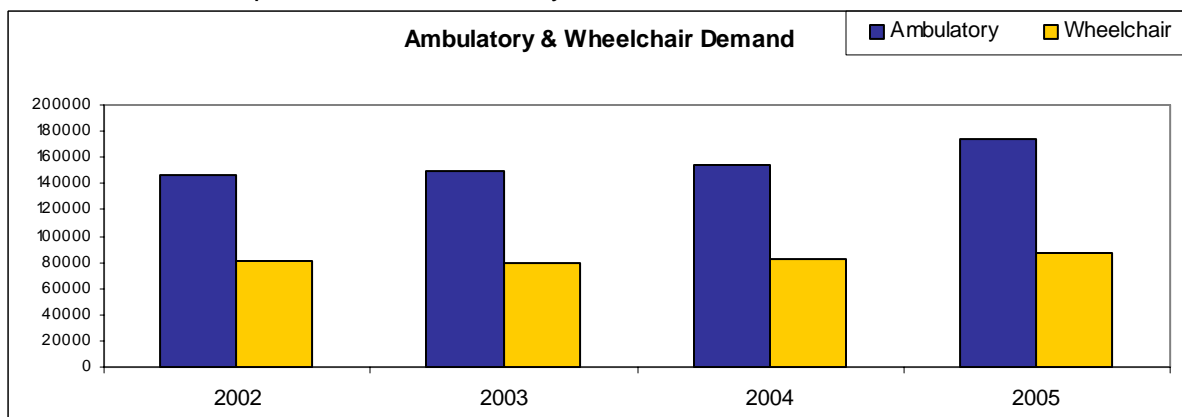
Specific indicators reported monthly include: Cost per Ride, no-show rate, cancellation rate, late-ride reports, and customer feedback. Metro's overall cost per ride in 2005 was consistent with the final year in our 5-year contracting term for purchased transportation. Overall productivity was at 1.9 in 2005 compared to 1.82 rides per hour in 2004.

Cost per Trip
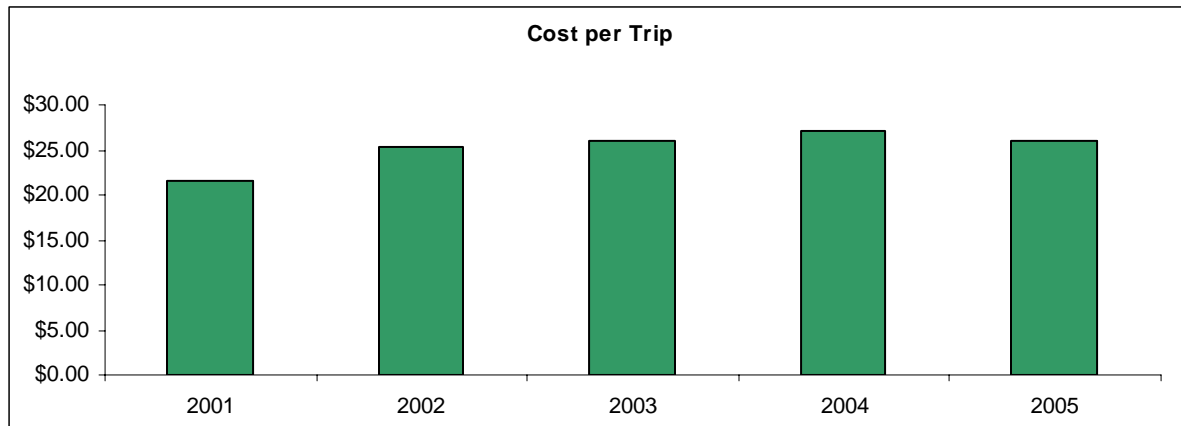
The cancellation rate for 2005 was 15%. This is an increase of 1% from the previous year. The no-show rate at the end of 2005 was 2.2%, down from 2.4% the previous year.

No-Shows and Cancels
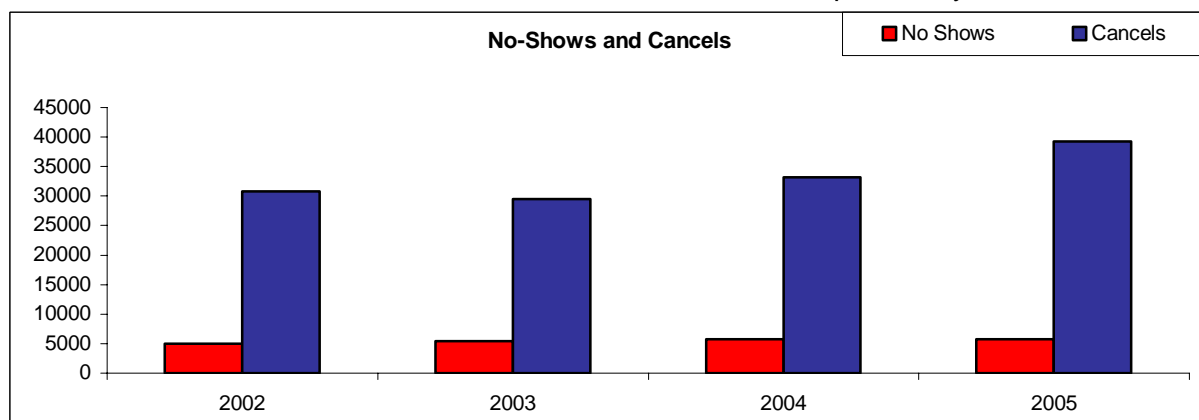
The feedback program data is generated by customer input, which allows Metro to track incidents, compliments, and complaints to be resolved. Monthly reporting began in July 2001, when Metro implemented the database to retain information. The program manager monitors feedback items for the paratransit unit.

Incidents regarding service performed by vendors are forwarded for resolution. The vendor then communicates the resolution and customer contact to Metro for closure. Resolution may include callbacks or letters to customers. Late rides, leave attended status, and travel time issues were the leading concerns for paratransit feedback. In previous years, top concerns have been late rides, door-to-door service and driver behavior.

Metro Plus performance indicators track the number of complaints per 1000 trips taken. The table below shows the trend for the last few years.

Complaints per 1000 Trips	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
	2.53	2.56	2.46	2.37	1.39 YTD April

Feedback Program - Complaints
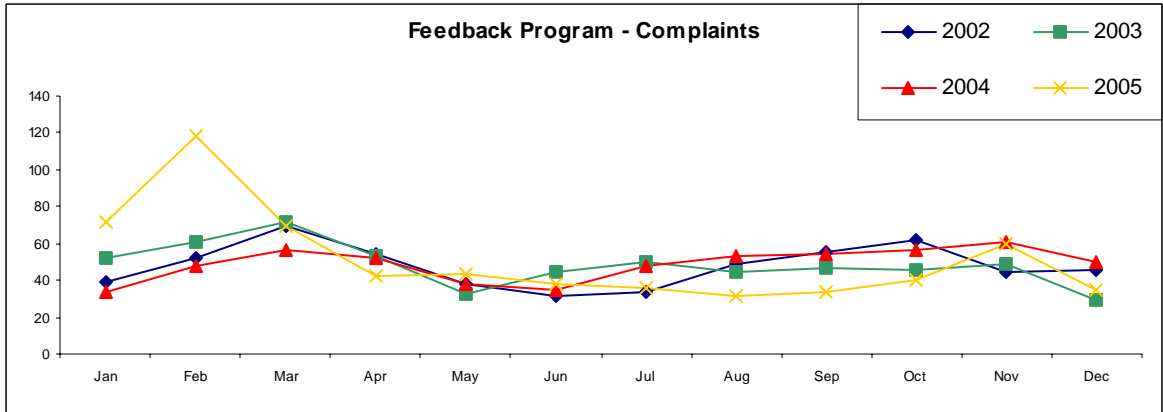
The number of complaints was up almost 6% in 2005 from previous years.

Feedback Program - Compliments
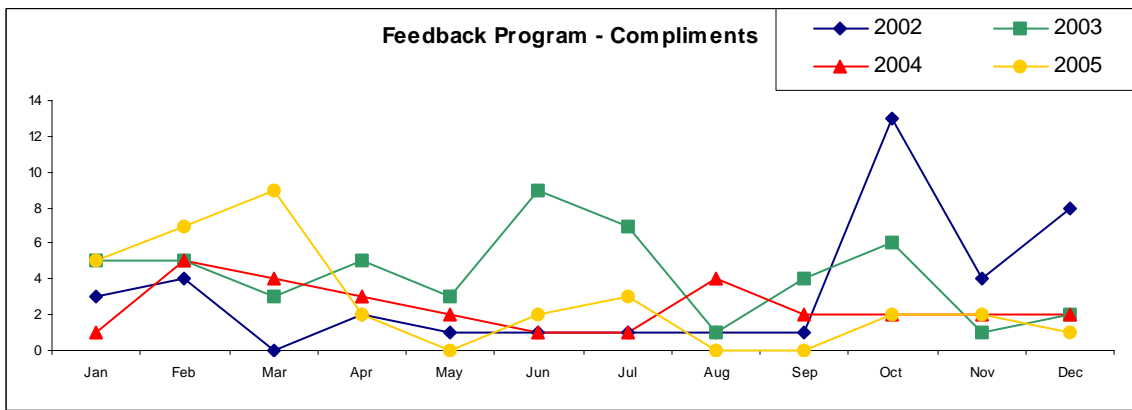
Contractors and Cooperative Programs

ADA Service 2005 was the final year of paratransit contracts with 3 vendors: Badger Cab, Laidlaw Transit Services, and Transit Solutions, Inc. In the fall, Metro requested proposals for ADA paratransit services and a small pilot program called Long-Term Assignment (LTA). Introduction of the pilot program in late October served the peak service hours more efficiently and at a more competitive price per ride for 15% of the daily trips. All new ADA paratransit service contracts for the term beginning in 2006 are completed. In 2006, Metro contracted with an additional vendor, Badger Bus Lines, Inc.

Transit Solutions performed a smaller number of trips for Metro because of its higher per trip costs. Badger Cab scheduled and dispatched over 1/3 of Metro's daily service. Laidlaw's portion of the service has been scheduled by Metro since April 2000. As a cost saving measure, Metro does not directly operate late evenings or on weekends when demand can be very light and vary greatly. Badger Cab and Transit Solutions manage their own productivity because they do their own scheduling and are compensated for each completed trip. As Laidlaw Transit is compensated by the hour, its productivity depends in part on the efficiency of the schedule Metro provides. Productivity directly impacts Metro's overall cost per ride.

Metro's directly operated vehicles have maintained fairly consistent productivity including 2005 with a slight increase to 1.90 trips per hour. As Laidlaw operates service during hours of light demand, its productivity has been consistently below Metro's. Compared to 2001, Laidlaw has improved its productivity from an average of 1.49 in 2001 to 1.90 trips per hour in 2005.

Cooperative Programs Dane County also coordinates funding that supplements Metro's ADA paratransit service. Metro reports to Dane County the number of ADA trips taken on Metro paratransit by MA Wavier Program participants. In turn, Dane County is able to collect reimbursement from the State and pass-through approximately 60% of the cost of the trip as opposed to the regular fare. In 2005, this program generated $2,057,602 in revenue for Metro.

Additional cooperative programs with Dane County include: Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Exceptional Rides Program, and Group Access Service (GAS). These particular programs represent cooperative funding agreements with Dane County for specialized transportation. Dane County provides these services and they are not considered ADA service.

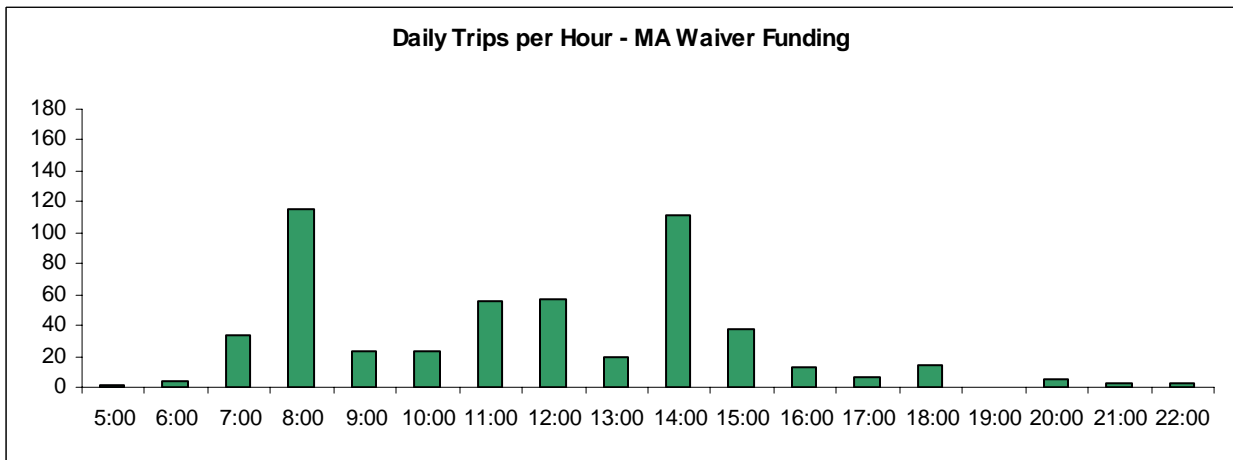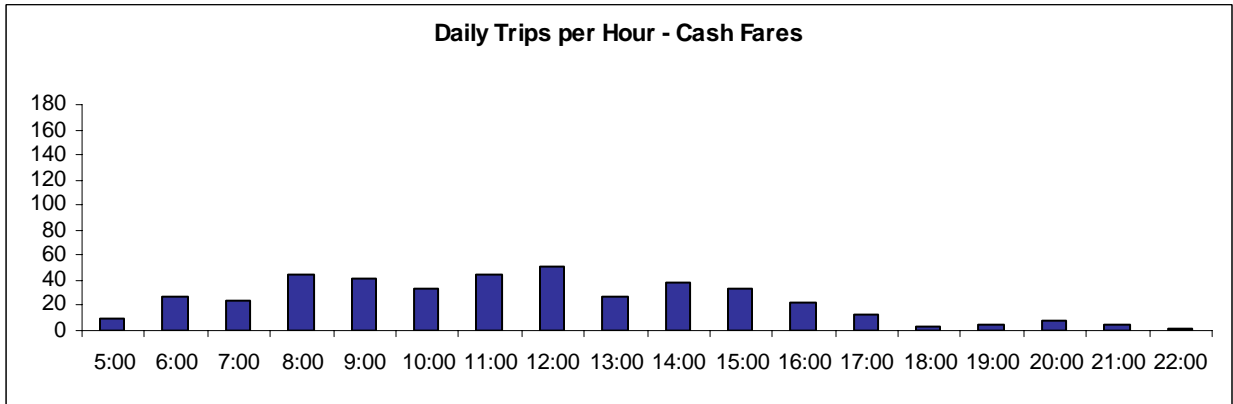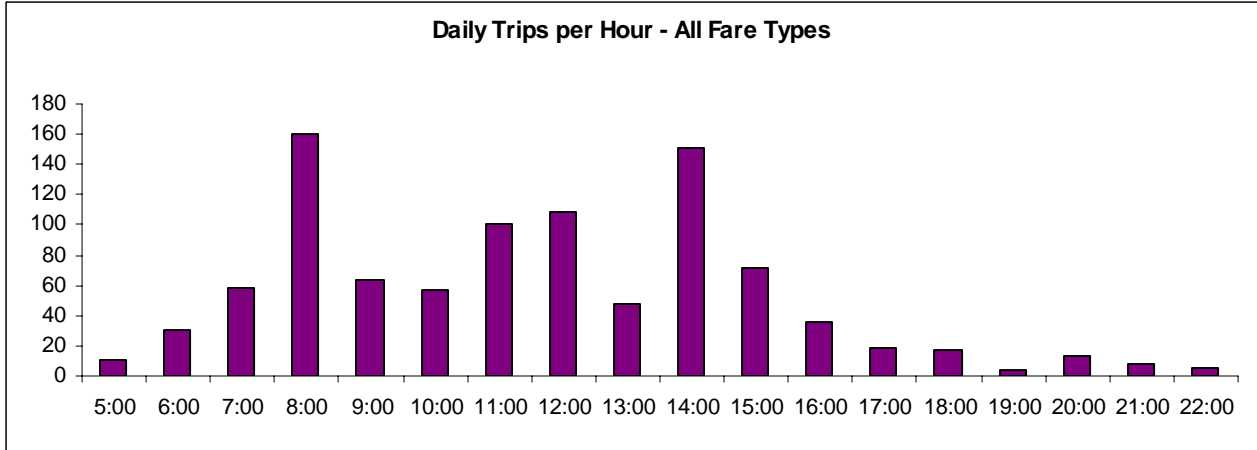| Programs 2005	RSVP	GAS	Ex-Rides
One-Way Trips	14,182	21,286	9383
City Funding	$58,379	$134,382	$48,900

ADA Transit Subcommittee

The Subcommittee attained quorum for each of its meetings in 2005 in spite of the fact that it maintained 2 vacant member positions. Also, an alder was not able to attend since May 2005 and until Alder Timothy Gruber accepted an appointment to the Subcommittee in January 2006.

The Subcommittee assisted staff in revising the qualifications and performance standards for paratransit contractors, addressed issues related to new fare collection technology, and obtained input for paratransit bus specifications. Annual reviews of Metro's strategic plan and marketing plan were completed. Advertising on Metro's small bus fleet was recommended by members; and, review of the paratransit newsletter frequency and content was completed. The Subcommittee worked closely with staff to develop a pilot program for high-utilization customers of paratransit services. The one-year pilot was implemented in October 2005 and will be monitored in early 2006 for effectiveness.

Angela Bennett, the city's new disabilities rights specialist, appeared at the November meeting for introductions and discussion of her favorable observations of Metro's service to people with disabilities. The Subcommittee developed improved plans for community outreach in the last part of the year.

Of recurring interest to the Subcommittee is the trip demand analysis by time of day. The peak/off-peak fare differential for paratransit efficiency shifted some fare-paying customers away form the designated peak request times of day. However, Metro still experiences a high demand during designated peak hours by customers not sensitive to the fare tariff. Generally, the highest peak hour demand comes from customers supported by the MA Waiver Program and represents a significant portion of the ridership. The demand patterns have not changed in recent years other than the scale has been increased to accommodate increased demand.

Daily Trips per Hour - All Fare Types

Daily Trips per Hour - Cash Fares

Daily Trips per Hour - MA Waiver Funding

Community Outreach

In 2005, Metro marketing expanded its communication network with the disabled community by subscribing service agencies to e-mail alerts on up-coming service detours, changes and issues. Metro has continued offering and presenting training programs for the Madison area senior centers, retirement communities, and nursing homes.

Trapeze Software Optimization

Metro's paratransit service is scheduled using Trapeze Software. Computerized scheduling helps manage a large number of trip requests. The mobile data terminals provide global vehicle positioning and real-time performance data for dispatchers to monitor the directly operated portion of the service. As drivers and dispatchers become more familiar with the capabilities of the system, additional efficiency and service benefits are anticipated.

Staff has pursued the task of templating standing ride requests. Templating is the Trapeze process of maintaining trips assigned to the same schedule on a recurring basis. Templating results in greater service consistency and efficiency for both the customer and the contractors. The manner in which Metro has been maintaining templates has proven to be labor intensive and actively managing advance change information is difficult. Staff was able to double the number of templated rides in Trapeze in 2005 using a different method and plans to continue developing templates.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation Management Audit, March 2004

Every 5 years, Metro Transit is required to complete a management audit for the system. It includes comparisons to peer systems, a functional review, and a policy and decision making review. The audit concluded with 6 recommendations for Metro Plus. Metro is actively engaged in addressing those recommendations as follows:

1.   Metro should formalize its monitoring of on-time performance beyond the practice of relying on customer reports.
a.   Metro implemented an Internet data portal for contractors to report their trip performance back to Metro. The information is transferred to the Trapeze database to create on-time performance reports identical to the reports that will be generated as a result of the mobile data terminal implementation in 2004 for the Metro fleet.

2.   Efforts need to be taken to tighten up the scheduling process, continuing the Trapeze Software optimization that has already been accomplished.
a.   Complete on-time performance reporting will help identify specific areas to improve.

3.   Metro should focus more time on educating ADA eligible riders on how to use fixed-route bus service.
a.   Metro's Marketing unit is actively working with seniors and community service agencies to promote fixed-route services.
b.   The ADA Transit Subcommittee is actively soliciting input from community agencies.

4.   A planned new fixed-route dispatch/radio system is expected to require a staff person on duty later in the evening. Metro Transit should ensure that this person is able to handle incoming calls as well, to evaluate change requests and provide confirmation if the change is feasible.
a.   Recent expansion of Operations supervisory staff includes
    staff working later hours at the dispatch desk and taking paratransit calls.

5.   Standards should be developed and implemented that apply to the paratransit program as a whole, including Metro Transit's in-house services. Minimum performance thresholds should be established in such important areas as schedule adherence and the road call rate.

a.   Metro is currently evaluating the quality of data from recent technology implementations. Once the data can be evaluated and compared to community expectations, standards will be developed.

6.   Metro Transit provides a comparable amount of transit service compared with its peers, but expended more resources in terms of overall costs. Metro Transit should explore its options for reducing paratransit costs.

a.   In late 2005, Metro completed the request-for-proposals (RFP) process for a pilot program successfully aimed at competitive pricing. The broader RFP for paratransit services was also very competitive compared to prior pricing for some aspects of the service.

These recommendations will be discussed at future ADA Transit Subcommittee meetings.