

---

---

## METRO PARATRANSIT PROGRAM – PROGRESS REPORT

---

---

To: Members, City of Madison Transit & Parking Commission  
From: Crystal Martin, Paratransit Program Manager  
Date: 7/1/08

---

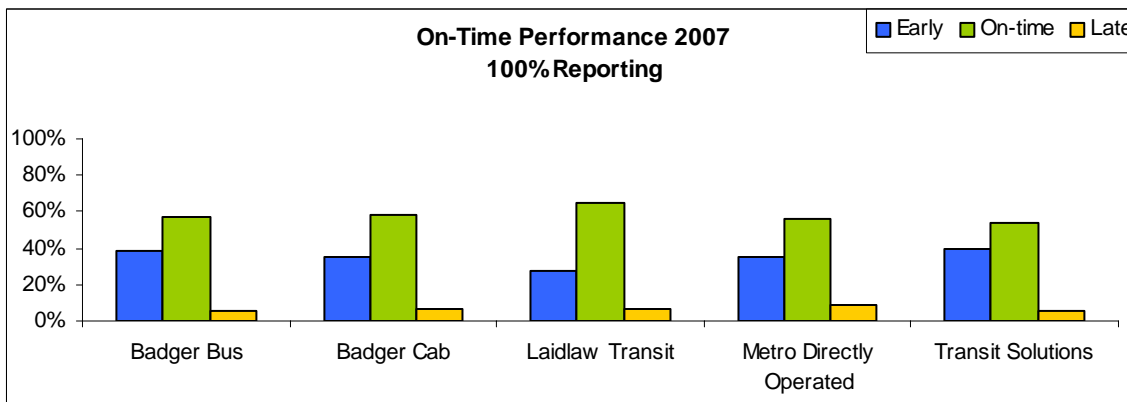
Metro Transit's Paratransit Program (Metro + Plus) provides paratransit services as a complement to the fixed-route bus service. Individuals with Disabilities who cannot access the fixed-route system because of their disability are eligible for paratransit with Metro. Although performance reports are 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. The report concludes with Metro's activities in response to the recommendations by the WisDOT Management audit of 2004, and the Federal triennial review completed in September 2007.

### 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

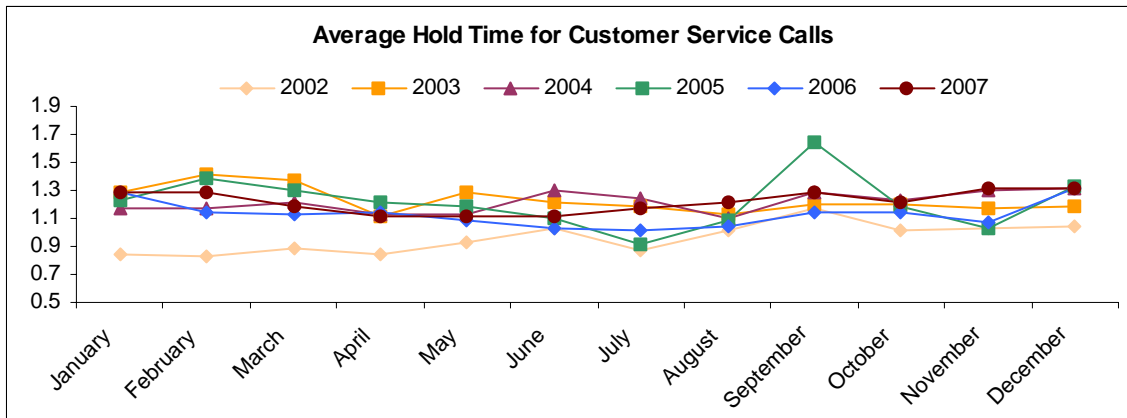
**On Time Performance** One method of measuring capacity constraints is whether the system is delivering service on-time (response time). A pattern of late service indicates that the system needs more capacity. Rides are either: early, on-time, or late. Early rides are rides for which the service vehicle arrives any one minute before the requested pick up time. On-time rides are ride for which the service vehicle arrives 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. Metro captures performance data from all contracted trips and directly operated trips in the software database. Metro's paratransit vendors began reporting completed trip data electronically in January 2006. Vendor supplied data is compared to passengers late trips reports 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.



Early or On-time performance was: Badger Bus 95%, Badger Cab 93%, Laidlaw/ First Transit 93%, Metro 91%, and Transit Solutions at 94%.

Metro also tracks Late Reports by our customers. Systematic tracking of customer Late reports and complaints began July 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. For 2007, Metro recorded 1,290 Late Ride reports from paratransit customers. That represents .5% of performed rides compared to .03% in 2006. Metro also compares customer reports of Late Trips to the electronic data provided by vendors.

**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 inappropriately limit capacity by limiting a customer's ability to request a trip. Metro's Customer Service Center serves all modes (Paratransit and Fixed-Route) and its performance is charted below.



In 2007, 1.05% more calls were answered and average wait time increased to 1:22 minutes from 1:13 in 2006. The phone system was no longer able to track abandoned calls and, in general; the data has become increasingly unreliable. Metro plans for a new and updated phone system with increased reporting and tracking capabilities in 2008. Customer service representatives continue to participate in meetings to discuss timely policy and operational questions or clarifications about issues raised by customers.

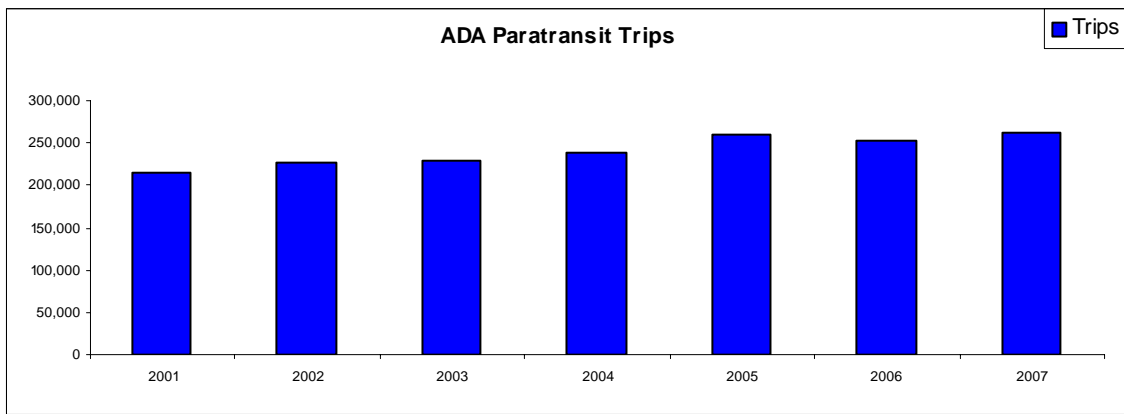
**Eligibility Process** Metro processed an average of 49 new applications each month for paratransit service in 2007. Customers may request an application by calling the Customer Service Center or downloading it from Metro's website. Applicants are notified, in writing, of their determination within 21 days or receipt of a completed application. The information provided on some application is not sufficient to make a determination without an in-person functional assessment. Presumptive eligibility is assigned until an in-person assessment can be arranged. Metro does not currently have a contractor to perform these in-person assessments. A few national companies are developing specialist's networks to provide these types of services to transit utilities. Most recent trainings provided by the National Transit Institute on ADA Paratransit Eligibility Determinations emphasize a strong in-person interview or functional assessment by transit systems.

Every three years, Metro re-certifies each paratransit customer to maintain current information and eligibility. Metro completed a re-certification year in 2007. The next re-certification year will be in 2010.

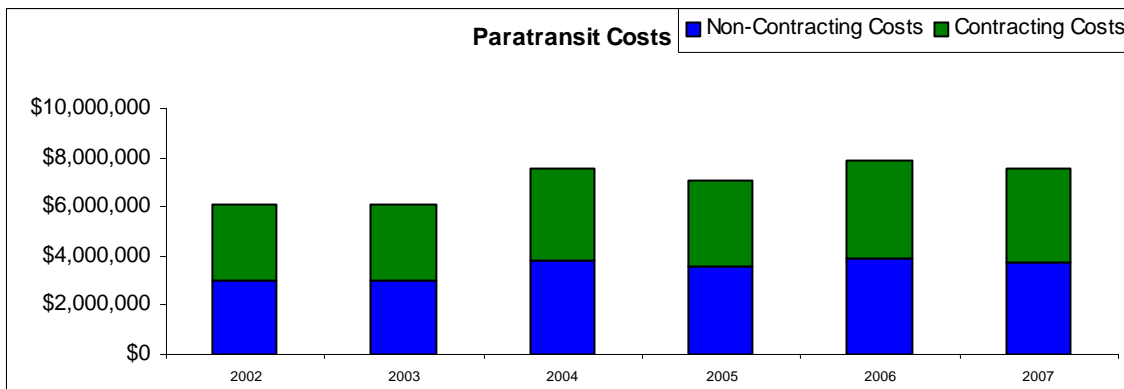
**Service Area** In February 2008, Metro completed an annual audit of ride bookings for the paratransit service area. The check indicated that all trips were compliant with Metro's boundary area. The paratransit service area is in accordance with the ADA and encompasses the area  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile around each of Metro's core routes. Commuter routes do not establish paratransit service area. Customers frequently call Customer Service to ask about specific destinations and whether they fall within 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 Transit & Parking Commission 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 contracted paratransit services are included. Metro coordinates almost 22,000 trips each month for people with disabilities. In 2007, ADA paratransit ridership increased 3.4% (8,671 trips). This compares to a drop of 3.1% (8,174) in 2006.

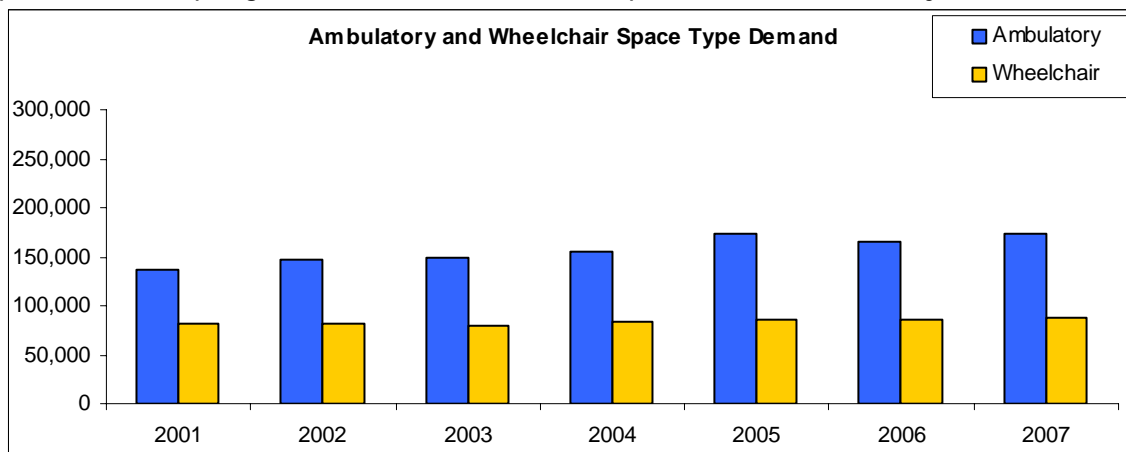


The number of unduplicated persons that requested paratransit trips increased by 52 individuals in 2007. Meanwhile, the average trips per customer also increased to 147.3 in 2007 compared to 146.7 in 2006. A significant portion of the cost of paratransit service is for contracting other companies to provide trips. The remaining cost is for directly-operated paratransit service, call center expenses, and administration. The program costs increase annually to accommodate both growth in ridership and increasing costs. Cost per trip and program costs do not include debt, depreciation, or fixed assets. The graph below displays the total program costs with contracting costs as a part of the total.

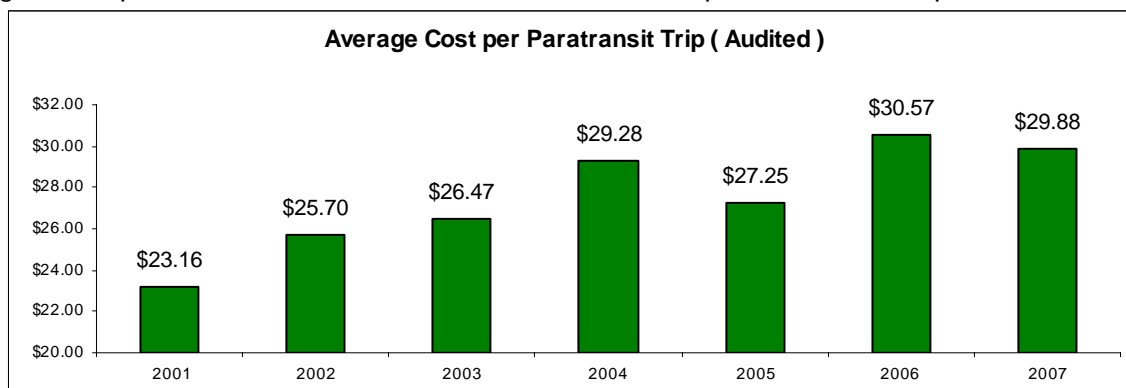


When breaking out the service requests by those requesting accessible vehicles (wheelchair space request) and those that can be accommodated by sedans (ambulatory), the trend of higher ambulatory demand continues compared to wheelchair type space requests. However, the growth of ambulatory space type requests significantly outpaced wheelchair type requests. Ambulatory space type requests grew by 4.5% compared to a growth of 1.2% in wheelchair type requests.

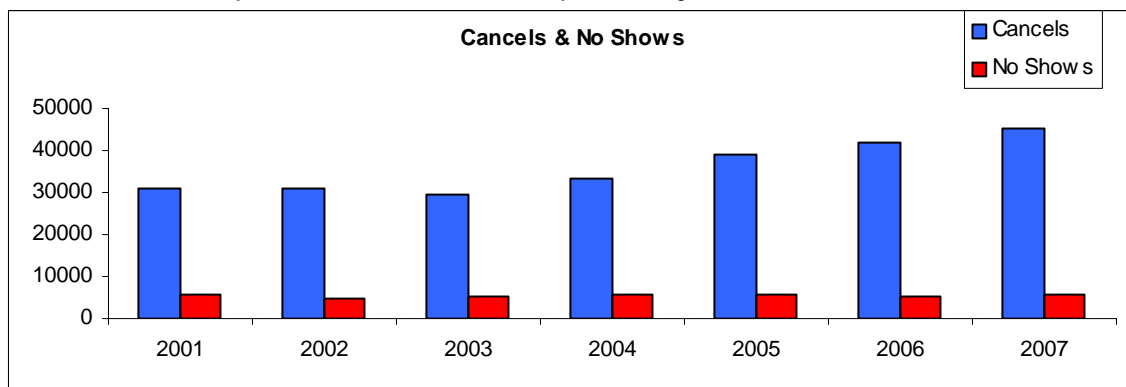
Demand for both wheelchair and ambulatory space types continue to have seasonal changes in demand patterns. The spring and fall seasons tend to be peak demand times of year.



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 2007 was lower than the previous year. Productivity, the number of trips performed per hour, significantly impacts costs per trip. Overall productivity was at 1.83 in 2007 compared to 1.82 in 2006. The Operations Unit set higher productivity goals for paratransit in mid – 2007 with sustainable improvements anticipated for 2008.



The cancellation rate for 2007 was 17.3% compared to 16.6% in 2006. The no-show rate at the end of 2007 was 2.2%, up a mere .01% from the previous year.

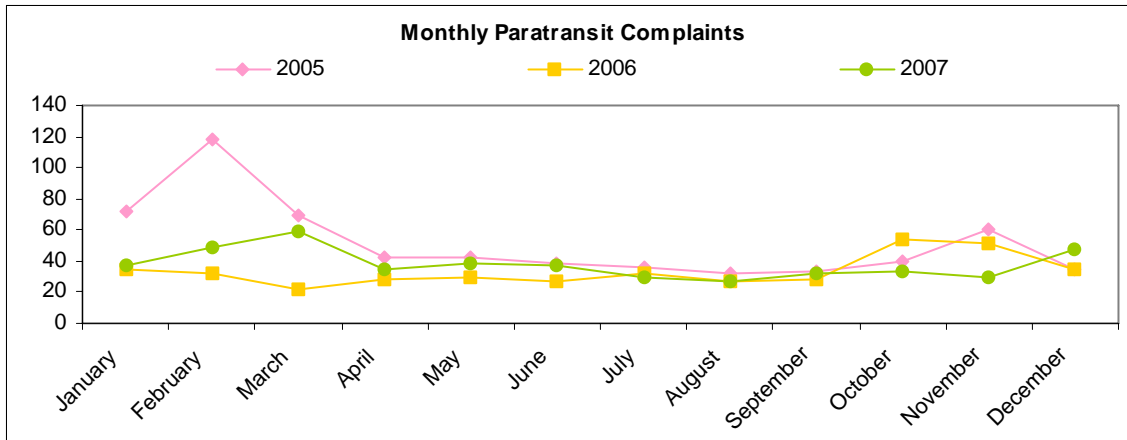


The feedback program data is generated by customer input, which allows Metro to track incidents, compliments, and complaints to be resolved. Monthly reporting began in July 2001, when Metro implemented the database to retain information. The program manager monitors feedback items for the paratransit unit.

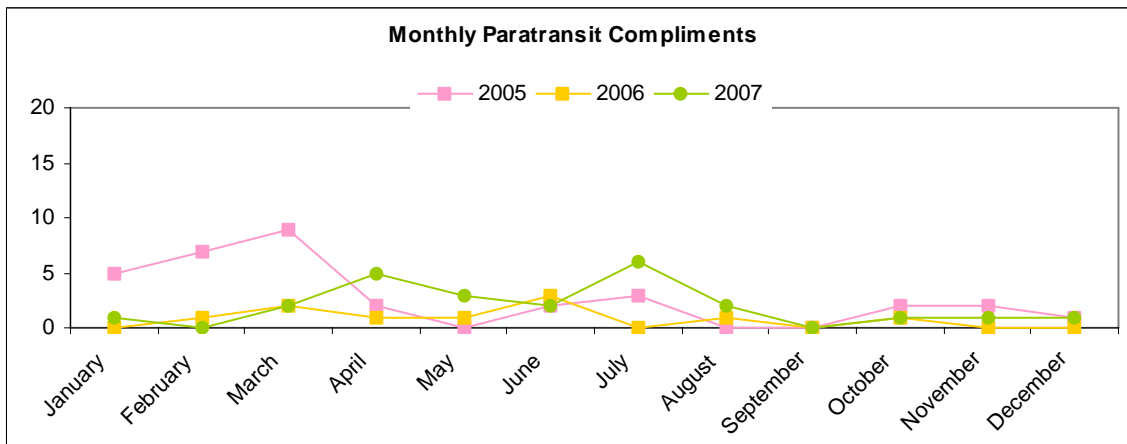
Incidents regarding service performed by vendors are forwarded for resolution. The vendor then communicates the resolution and customer contact to Metro for closure. Resolution may include callbacks or letters to customers. Late rides, leave attended status, and travel time issues were the leading concerns 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 1000 Trips	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
	2.53	2.56	2.46	2.37	1.59	1.73



Complaints were up 12.7% from the previous year. Compliments were up 26% in 2007.



### Contractors and Cooperative Programs

**ADA Service** 2007 was a very stable year without many changes. Metro directly operated hours of service were down by 8% from the previous year due to extended absences. Accordingly, costs for contracted services exceeded budget, however, savings in salary and benefits also adjusted for a positive outcome.

2006 was the first year of a new contract term for ADA paratransit services. Metro contracts with Badger Cab, Badger Bus Lines, Laidlaw Transit, and Transit Solutions. Also, Badger Bus Lines is the contractor for a 3-year term for Long-Term Assignment. This program serves the peak

service hours more efficiently and at a more competitive price per ride for 15% of Metro paratransit's daily trips.

Transit Solutions now performs a larger portion of dedicated ambulatory trips because of its lower per trip costs. The Laidlaw Transit and Badger Bus Lines portions of the service are scheduled by Metro. 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 and part of the service performed by Badger Bus is compensated by the hour, their productivity depends in part on the efficiency of the schedule Metro provides. Productivity directly impacts Metro's overall cost per ride.

<b>Contractor ADA Paratransit Service</b>	<b>Trips Scheduled By</b>	<b>Service Paid By the</b>
Badger Cab	Company	Trip
Badger Bus (Long-Term Assignment)	Company	Trip
Transit Solutions	Company	Trip
Badger Bus	Metro	Hour
Laidlaw Transit	Metro	Hour

Metro's directly operated vehicles have maintained fairly consistent productivity up to 2005 at 1.90 trips per hour. In 2006, Metro's productivity dropped to 1.72 and has remained there. As Laidlaw operates service during hours of light demand, its productivity had been consistently below Metro's. However, Laidlaw has maintained its productivity at 1.9 for several years, dropping to 1.8 in 2007. Badger Bus Lines maintained an average of 1.8 trips per hour.

**Cooperative Programs** Dane County coordinates funding programs that supplement Metro's ADA paratransit service in the community. 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 2007, this program generated \$2,430,318 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.

<b>Programs 2007</b>	<b>RSVP</b>	<b>GAS</b>	<b>Ex-Rides</b>
One-Way Trips	12,330	19,248	8,236
City Funding	\$70,909	\$127,347	\$43,000

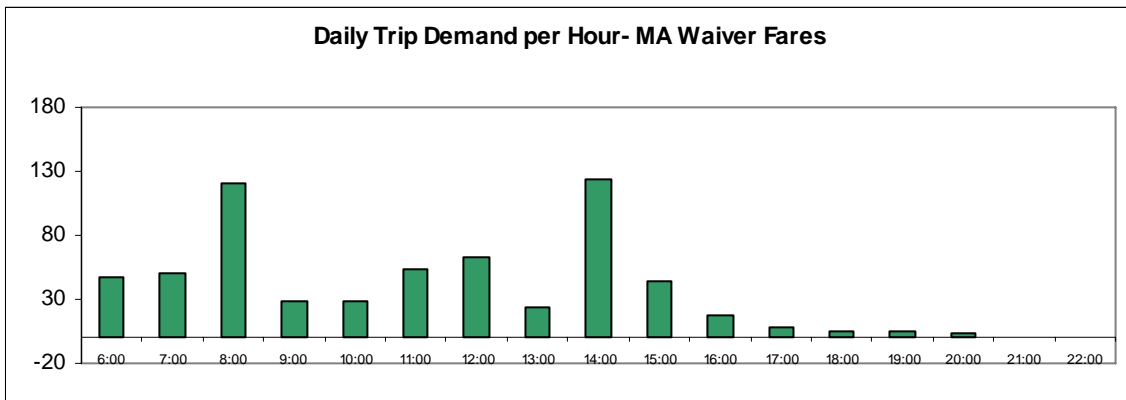
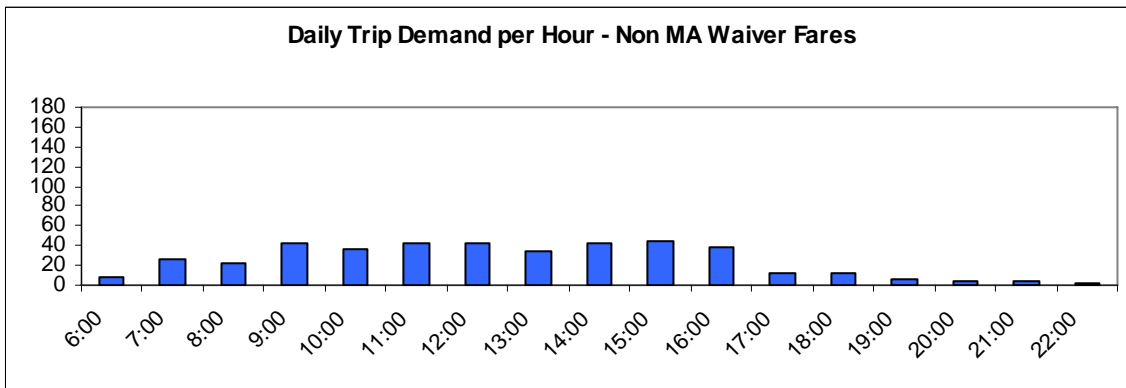
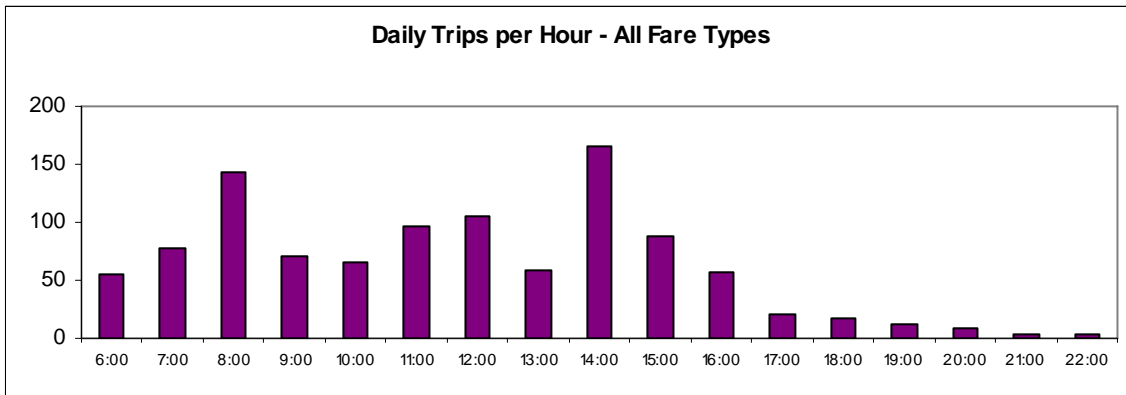
#### **ADA Transit Subcommittee**

The Subcommittee attained quorum for all but one of its meetings in 2007. Alder Tim Gruber continued his appointment to ADA TS.

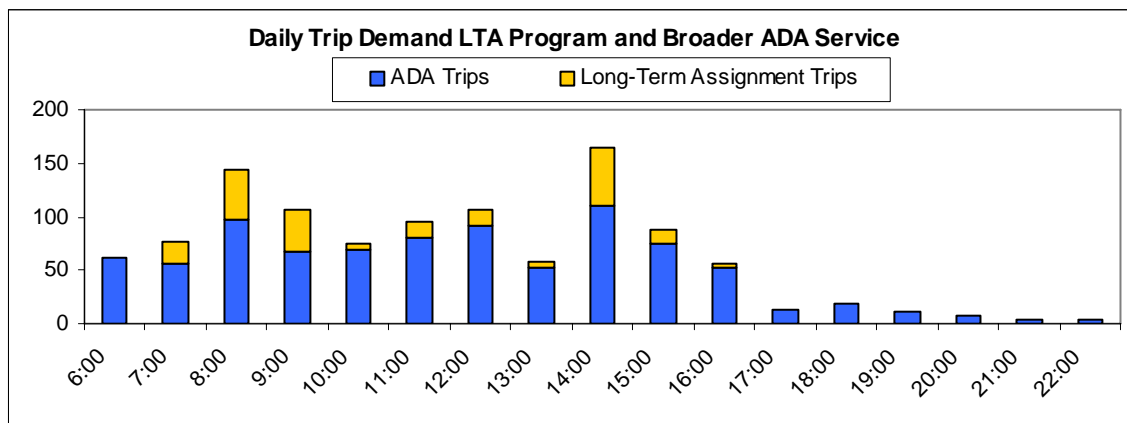
The Subcommittee prepared the groundwork for several issues on the near horizon for accessible transportation services. In particular, the a review of the impact of the peak fare, a one -year pilot of a 31 at senior/disabled pass for fixed-route, the impact of long-term care reform (Family

Care) on ADA transit, and duplication of services issues with county programs. Policy memorandums were updated and approved to comply with findings in Metro's Federal Transit Administration Triennial Review. Also, the Subcommittee began a process to learn more about accessibility and pedestrian issues including 'complete streets' concepts and walking audits performed by Safe Community Coalition.

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 from 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 represent 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.



It is useful to see that the Long-Term Assignment Program helps Metro actively manage the peak hour demand.



### Community Outreach

In 2007, Metro introduced a video library to its website. Short clips demonstrate ‘How To’s’ for Metro services. Paratransit no-show fines can now be appealed on-line on Metro’s website. Metro continued to offer training sessions to organizations such as the MS Support Group, WAGS (service dogs), vocational rehabilitation centers, and by expanding our training program with Madison Area Senior Centers and Retirement Communities through joint efforts with the Senior Citizen Advisory Council and the SOS Senior Council. Metro continues to offer information in Braille and uses the TextNet/TTY system to communicate with our hearing impaired customers.

### 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. Metro upgraded the software to the most recent version. Expanded capabilities have the potential to resolve some scheduling challenges.

Staff has pursued the task of templating standing ride requests. Templating is the Trapeze process of maintaining trip 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. In 2007, staff worked on maintaining existing templates and developing a complete template schedule for runs. These efforts were not successful.

### 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. In 2007, Metro began reporting on-time compliance for all service providers, including in-house services. Productivity, in terms of rides per hour, are monitored daily. Initial goals have been set to improve productivity. Expanded use of Trapeze software tools for managing advance service requests have been implemented.
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 now reporting on-time performance for each service provider, including in-house services. Discussion of performance data with the ADA Transit Subcommittee in August 2006 focused on timely arrivals and travel time. No recommendations were made for schedule adherence or road-call rate thresholds.
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. After a successful pilot period, the program was bid for a 3-year term with favorable pricing. The broader RFP for paratransit services was also very competitive for some aspects of the service.

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

#### **Federal Transit Administration – Triennial Review 2007**

Metro had two findings from its Federal Transit Administration review:

1. Metro's Visitor Policy needed to be updated to accommodate individuals that may visit from jurisdictions without ADA paratransit in order to be compliant. The revised policy was adopted by the ADA Transit Subcommittee and posted.
2. Metro's ADA paratransit companion policy was correctly stated and implemented, however public information materials misstated the policy. Materials were updated to be compliant.