
METRO PARATRANSIT PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT

TO: City of Madison Transit & Parking Commission
ADA Transit Subcommittee

FROM: Crystal Martin, Paratransit Program Manager

DATE: 10/24/14

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 2009, and the Federal triennial review completed in 2013.

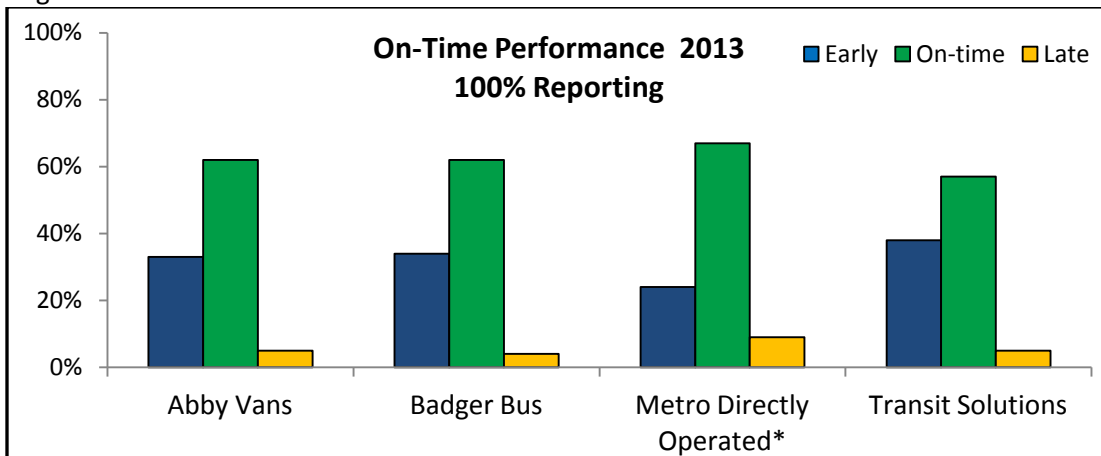
ADA Service Standards

The paratransit program has several components that must be complaint 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.

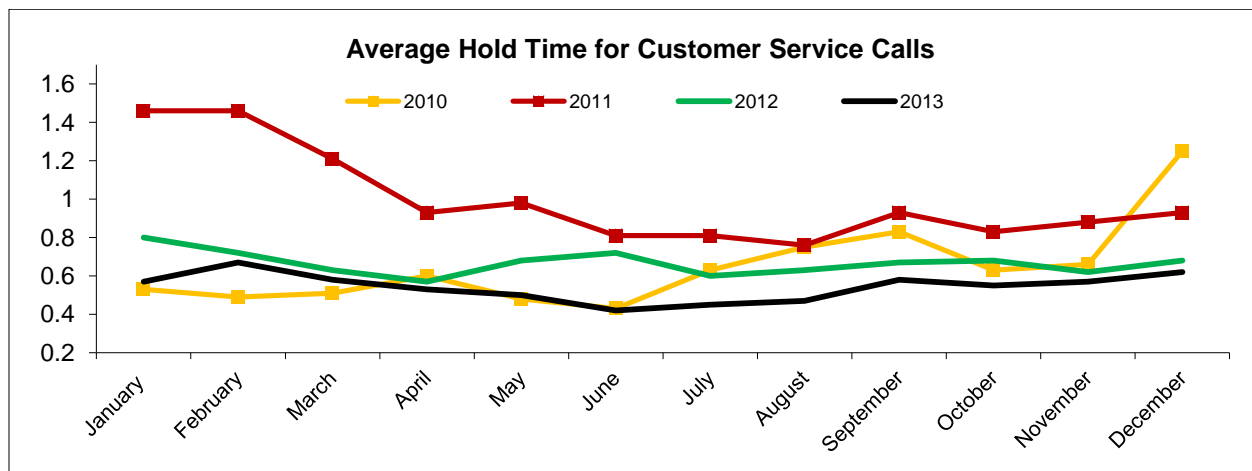
Metro captures performance data from all contracted trips and directly operated trips in the software database. Vendor supplied data is compared to passengers late trips reports for accuracy. Metro’s directly operated paratransit fleet is equipped with global positioning satellite (GPS) reporting and mobile data terminals (MDTs) to record and report data for each trip assigned.



Early or On-time performance was: Abby Vans 95%, Badger Bus 96%, Metro 91%, and Transit Solutions at 95%.

Metro also tracks Late Reports by our customers. Systematic tracking of customer Late reports and complaints began in 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 2013, Metro recorded 886 Late Ride reports from paratransit customers. That represents .3% of performed. 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.



Call quality is monitored daily. Customer service representatives continue to participate in meetings to discuss timely policy and operational questions or clarifications about issues raised by customers. Calls to and from Customer Service are digitally recorded and reviewed for quality assurance. In-coming phone numbers are also retained which has proved useful in verifying ride order information and complaint follow up.

Eligibility Process Metro processed an average of 36 new applications each month for paratransit service in 2013. 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 was not sufficient to make a determination without an in-person functional assessment. Presumptive eligibility is assigned until an in-person assessment can be arranged. Previous attempts at contracting for in-person assessments for more difficult determinations resulted in inconsistencies.

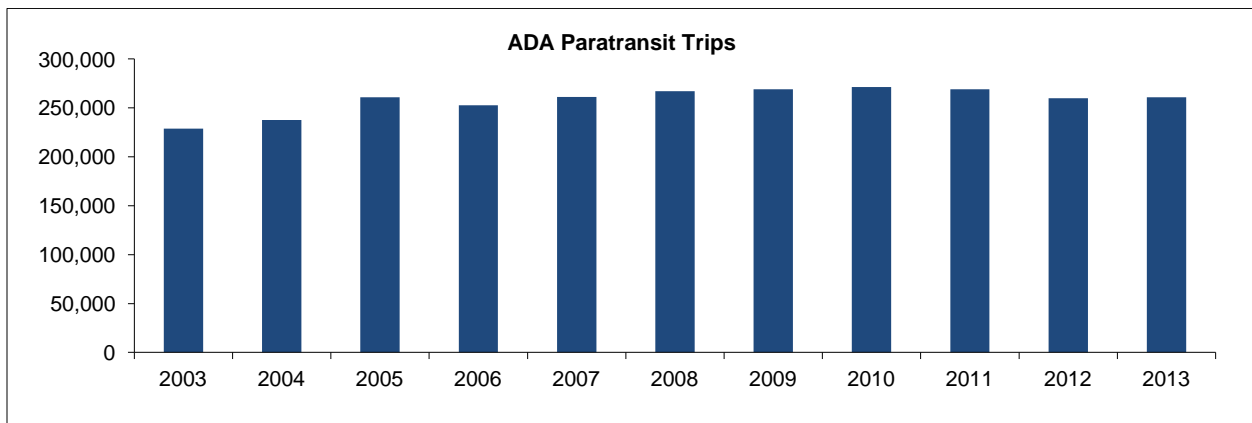
For many years now, trainings provided by the National Transit Institute on ADA Paratransit Eligibility Determinations emphasize a strong in-person interview or functional assessment by transit systems. Metro completed an eight-week pilot of in-person assessments in 2013. The pilot results showed a higher number of conditional eligibilities, a higher number of applicants opting out, and a higher capacity to identify likely candidates for travel training. Based on positive results, Metro obtained grant funding to implement an in-person assessment program in 2014.

Every three years, Metro re-certifies each paratransit customer to maintain current information and eligibility. The next re-certification year will be in 2013.

Service Area In June 2014, Metro completed an audit of ride bookings for compliance with paratransit service area and boundary map. 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 ¼ 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. Transportation options and Metro service are a significant consideration for people with disabilities when looking for employment or residences. 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.

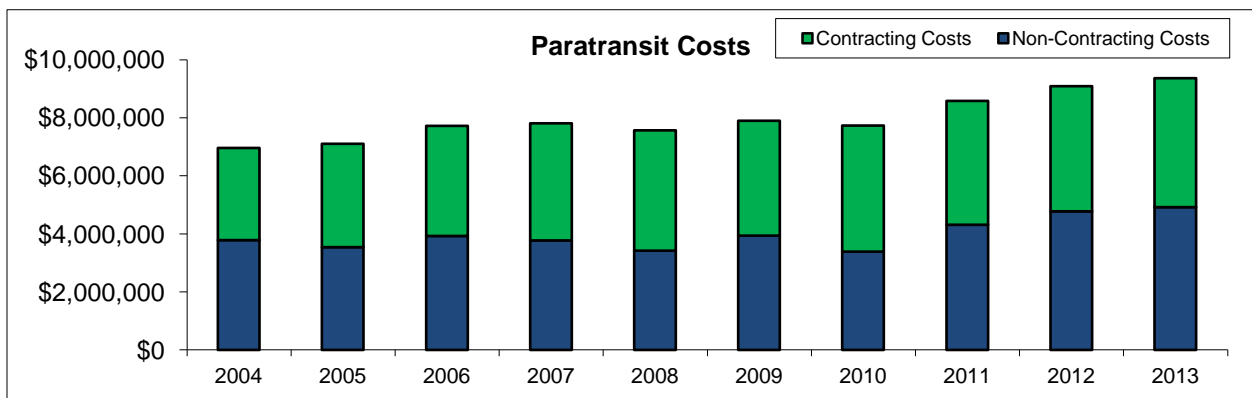
Performance Indicators

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 2013, ADA paratransit ridership *increased* 0.4% (1,079 trips). This compares to a *decrease* of 3.3% (8,997 trips) in 2012.

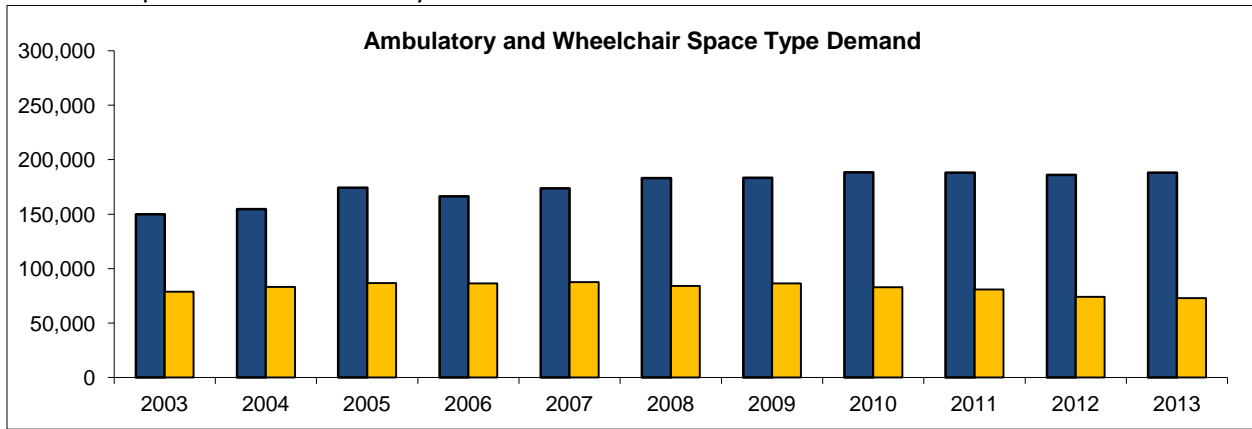


The number of unduplicated persons that requested paratransit trips decreased by 10 individuals in 2013. Meanwhile, the average trips per customer also increased to 157.2 in 2013 compared to 155.7 in 2012.

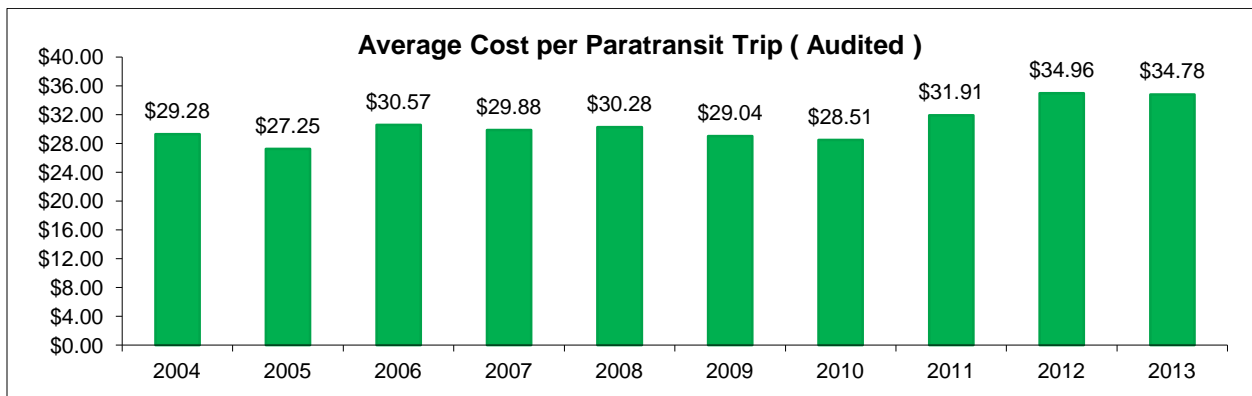
A significant portion of the cost of paratransit service is for contracting other companies to provide trips. The remaining cost is for directly-operated paratransit service, call center expenses, and administration. The program costs adjust annually to accommodate both growth in ridership and variable 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.



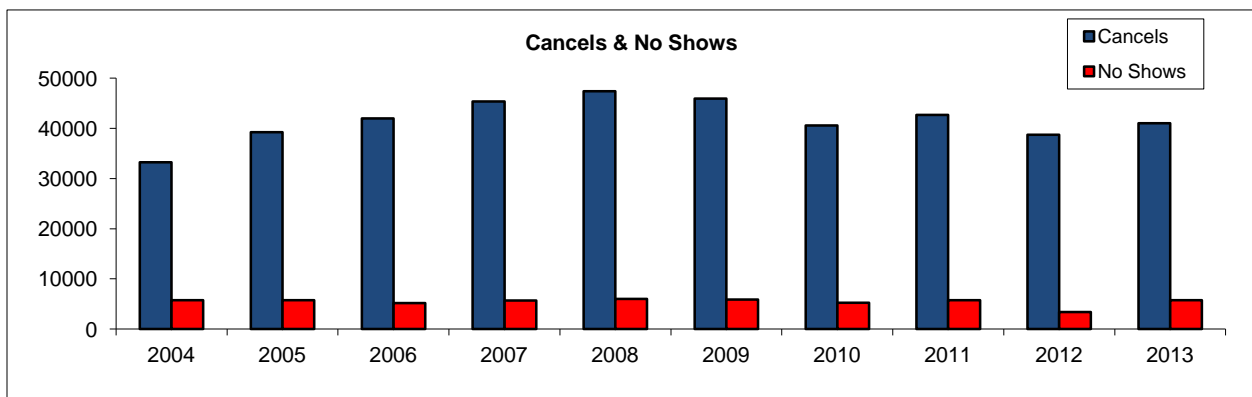
When breaking out the service requests by those requesting accessible vehicles (wheelchair space request) and those that can be accommodated without lift-equipped vehicles (ambulatory), the trend of higher ambulatory demand continues compared to wheelchair type space requests. The growth of ambulatory space type requests continues to outpace wheelchair type requests, with wheelchair space types declining slightly over the last several years. 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: No-show rate, cancellation rate, late-ride reports, and customer feedback. Metro’s overall cost per ride reflects increased internal costs and the fact that we are nearing the end of 5-year contracts with contractors. Contracted prices tend to increase during the contract term. Productivity, the number of trips performed per hour, significantly impacts costs per trip. Overall productivity was at 1.85 in 2013.



The cancellation rate for 2013 was 15.7% compared to 14.9% in 2012. The no-show rate at the end of 2013 was 2.2%, compared to 1.3% in 2012. The 2013 rate reflects that Late Cancellations were included in the no-show totals where they weren’t previously.

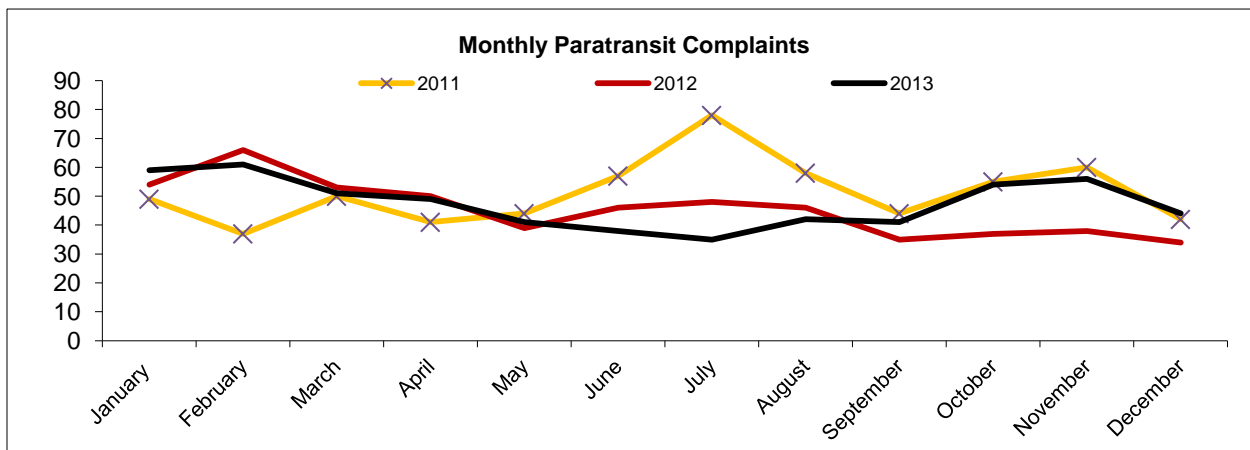


The feedback program data is generated by customer input, which allows Metro to track incidents, compliments, and complaints to be resolved. Operations supervisors respond to complaints or forward items to contractors for investigation. The program manager monitors feedback processing and trends for the paratransit unit.

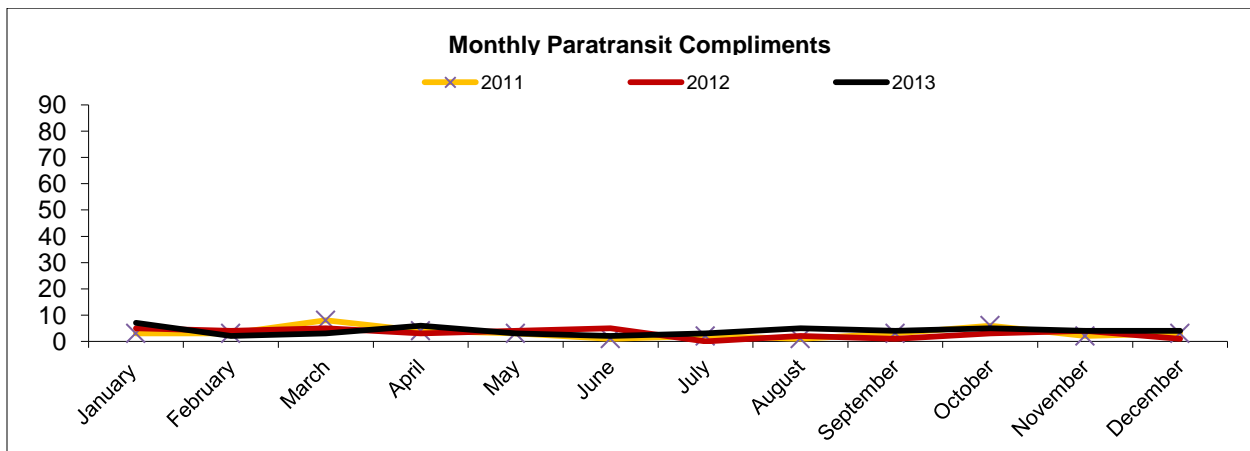
Incidents regarding service performed by vendors are forwarded for resolution. The vendor then communicates the resolution and customer contact to Metro for closure. Resolution may include callbacks or letters to customers. Late rides, leave attended status, and travel time issues continue to be the leading concerns for paratransit feedback.

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	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
	2.46	2.37	1.59	1.73	1.77	2.09	1.6	2.2	2.10	2.19



Complaints were up 5% from the previous year. **Compliments** were up 30% in 2013.



Contractors and Coordination Programs

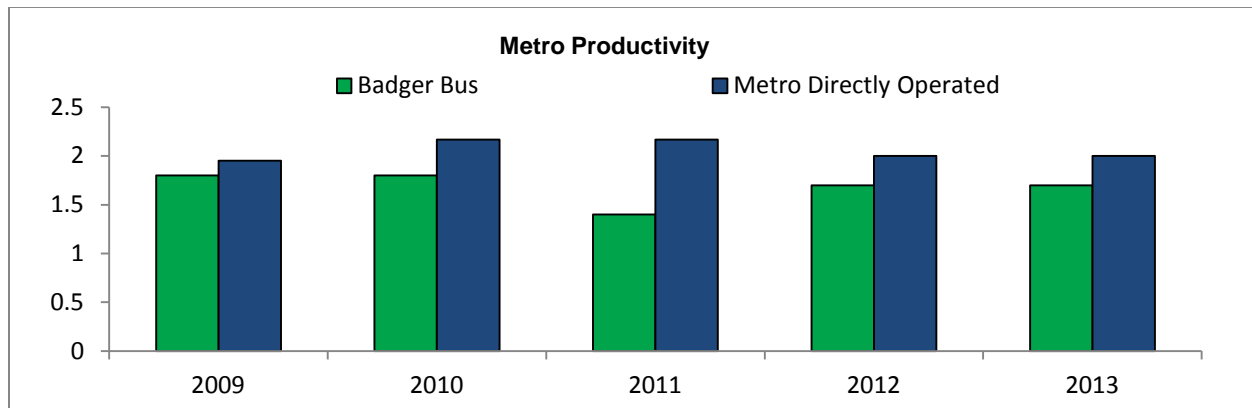
Contractors ADA Service 2011 began a new contracting term for Abby Vans, Badger Bus Lines, and Transit Solutions.

Current contracts expire June 30, 2015. Also, Badger Bus Lines just completed a contracted for the Long-Term Assignment program. This program served the peak service for 15% of Metro paratransit's daily trips. These trips were returned to regular Metro paratransit service September 1, 2014.

Transit Solutions now performs a larger portion of dedicated ambulatory trips because of its ability adjust capacity to match peak demand. The Badger Bus Lines portion of the service is 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. Abby Vans and Transit Solutions manage their own productivity because they do their own scheduling and are compensated for each completed trip. The 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.

Contractor	Trips Scheduled By	Service Paid By the
ADA Paratransit Service		
Abby Vans	Company	Trip
Badger Bus (Long-Term Assignment)	Company	Trip
Transit Solutions	Company	Trip
Badger Bus	Metro	Hour

Metro's directly operated vehicles have maintained fairly consistent productivity of 2.0 rides per hour. Metro staff report daily productivity numbers to operations unit staff and managers. Steady improvements to schedules, monitoring and encouragement are required to maintain productivity.



Public Transit Coordination with Human Services Transportation Metro has a long history of coordinating transportation funding with Dane County Human Services for individuals eligible for certain Medicaid programs. The success of these programs resulted in expanded coordinated activities with the county and other entities that authorize Medicaid transportation. Due to consolidation and re-organization of several Medicaid transportation programs, Metro has adapted with new agreements to be a working partner and available resource to agencies and Medicaid recipients in our community.

Previous agreements for Medicaid Common Carrier and Care Wisconsin have changed and are now obsolete. These all changed very rapidly in 2011. With approval from the Transit & Parking Commission, Metro was able to develop an agreement template for agencies to purchase paratransit fare media at agency rates in early 2012. By having this standardized template, Metro has been able to adapt quickly to the changing needs of riders and agencies. Agency agreements are now in place for Dane County Human Services, South Madison Coalition, Community Living Alliance, Care Wisconsin, and Monona Grove School District. The new flexibility for agencies and Metro has made these type of agreements the preferred arrangement.

Non-Medicaid 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.

Coordinated Human Services & Public Transit Programs				
Programs 2013	Retired Senior Volunteer Service	Group Access Service	Exceptional-Rides	Medicaid Waiver
Service Provider	County Contracts Out	County Contracts Out	County Contracts Out	Metro Plus
One-Way Trips	15,464	23,101	7,416	173,365
City (Expense)/ Revenue	(\$ 71,000)	(\$ 155,000)	(\$ 43,000)	\$3,277,324
% City Funding	39%	46%	40%	40%

Trip-by-Trip Coordination: Metro worked with the ADA Transit Subcommittee, Care Wisconsin, and Dane County Human Services to reduce, if not eliminate, duplicative efforts to service facility based programs, group transportation services, and Metro Paratransit. Metro negotiates trip times for sheltered employment sites that are served at the same time by county dedicated transportation services to avoid duplication of efforts. This results in more efficient loading and alighting for Metro service vehicles. For individuals who absolutely could not negotiate new times, Dane County’s dedicated service (STS) was provided.

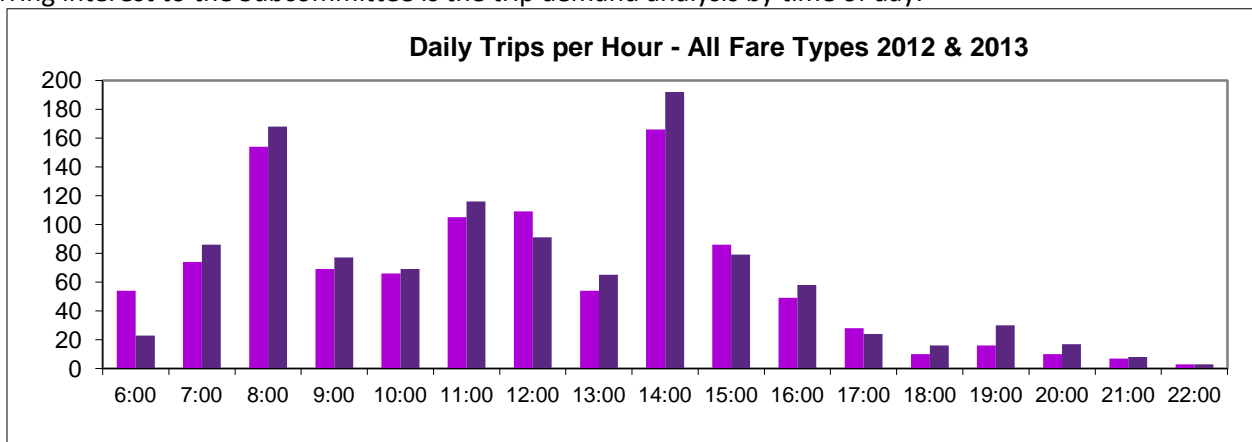
These efforts have improved efficiency and cost effectiveness in service delivery across programs. They have also restored balance to city and county roles in providing transportation services to people with disabilities.

ADA Transit Subcommittee (ADA TS)

The Subcommittee met 4 of 10 scheduled meetings in 2013. Alder Lisa Subek was appointed to ADA TS in May 2013 to ADA TS.

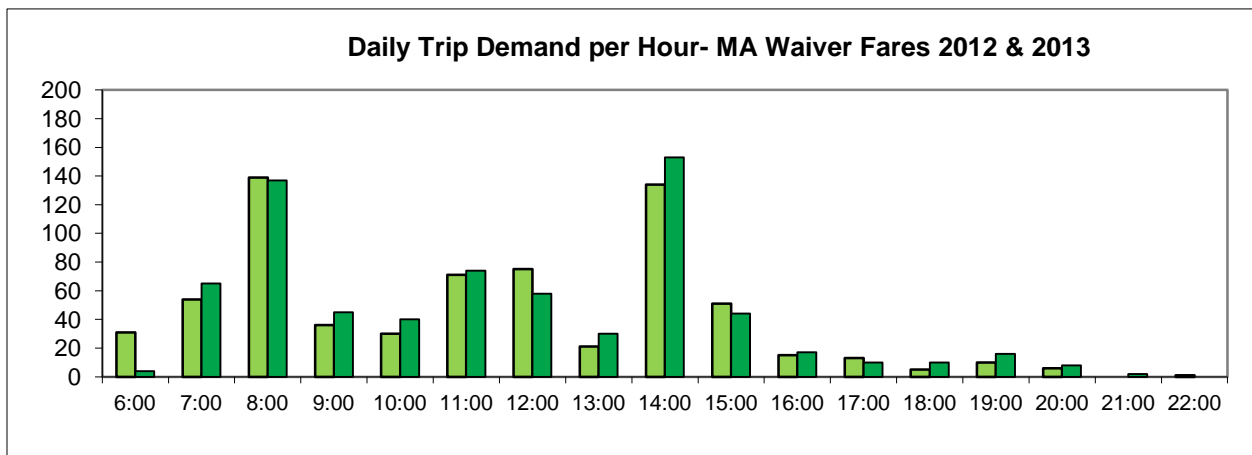
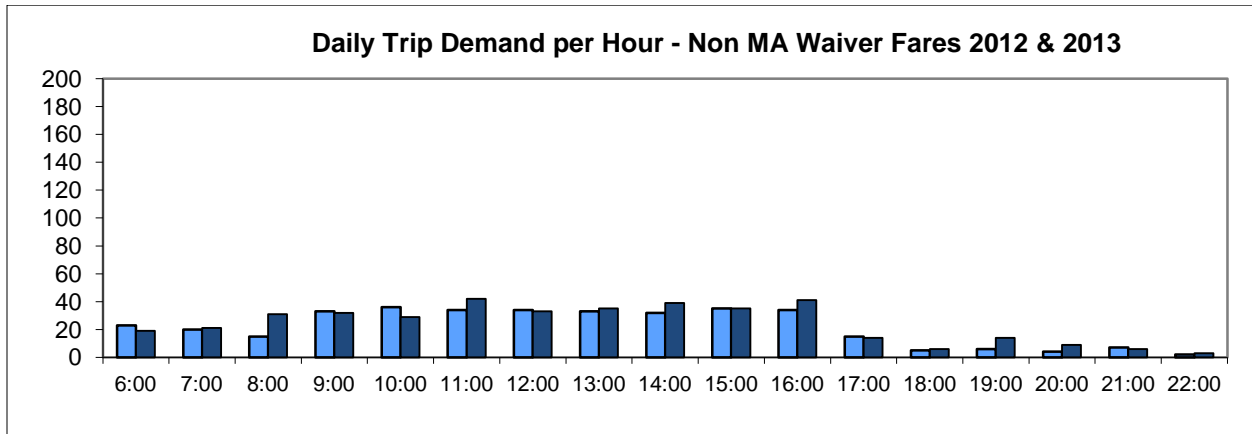
The Subcommittee made recommendations on several issues for accessible transportation services. Specifically: new bus specifications, monitoring changes to the Paratransit No Show Policy, benches at bus stops, bus stop spacing, input on the locally developed coordination plan by the MPO, updating materials to reflect new guidance from the FTA on ADA regulations, and piloting an in-person assessment process. The Subcommittee also discussed replenishing its ranks in a number of ways, including: consideration of having alternates, personal recruiting of potential members. Meeting times were adjusted to every other month starting in 2014.

Of recurring interest to the Subcommittee is the trip demand analysis by time of day.

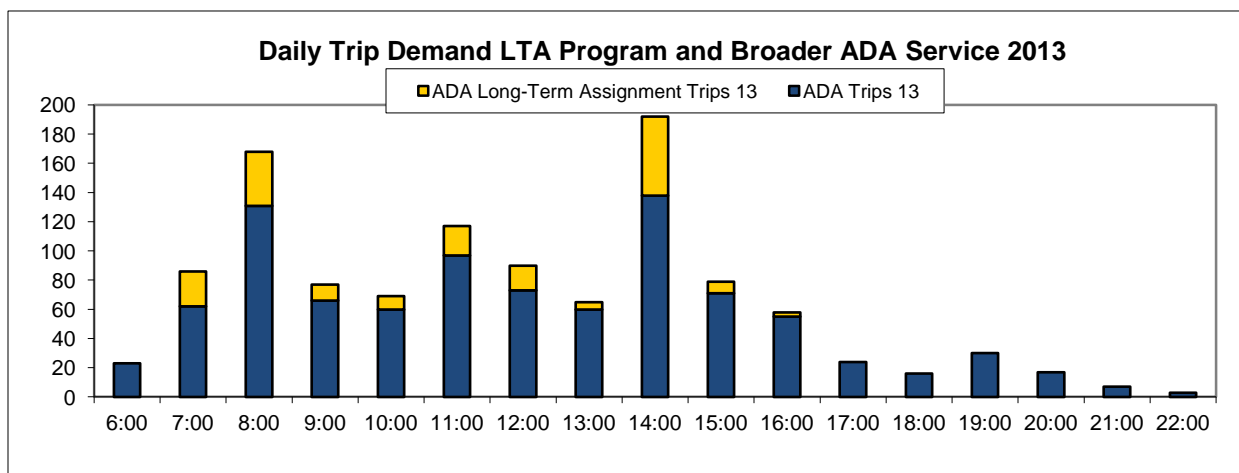


Graphs show 2012 data for a typical Monday and 2013 data for a typical Wednesday.

The peak/off-peak fare differential for paratransit was eliminated in early 2013. Metro experiences a high demand during designated peak hours, however, the fare differential only had a minimal impact compared to negotiating pick up times from common locations. 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 helped Metro actively manage the peak hour demand, below. The program was implemented prior to having dedicated staff to manage standing ride schedules. Higher cost and improved staff performance indicated Metro should repatriate the trips to Metro.



Community Outreach

Metro continues to offer training sessions to organizations such as MS Support Group, Wisconsin Council of the Blind, vocational rehabilitation centers, Madison Area Senior Center and Retirement Communities, Senior Citizen Advisory Council and the SOS Senior Council. Metro continues to offer information in Braille as well as multiple-language formats to communicate more effectively with riders of various backgrounds and needs.

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 to the newest version (v.11) in 2011. Metro continues to customize features for optimization of schedules.

Templating standing ride requests has been a priority for paratransit. Templating is the Trapeze Software 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. Metro has achieved a high level of template trips, over 90% of standing trips, and continues to build schedules for timely, efficient, and safe trips.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation Management Audit, April 2009

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 5 recommendations for Metro Plus. Metro is actively engaged in addressing those recommendations as follows:

- On-street supervision is critical to successful operations, customer satisfaction, and safety. Road supervisors do cover both fixed route and paratransit operations, yet Metro Plus currently relies more on the monitoring of performance data than on-street monitoring of its services in terms of ride checks and performance evaluation. Although budget limitations have been cited as the reason for reducing supervision since 2005, a greater emphasis should be placed on regular, on-street supervision of both directly-operated and contracted paratransit operations to conduct ride checks and verify service issues highlighted through regular data reporting.
 - *Metro has reinstated on-street supervision by Metro road supervisors.*
- Previous FTA recommendations have noted the need for greater documentation of customer service calls to customers that may also be used to verify eligibility for ADA paratransit services. To date, Metro Plus does not explicitly call customers for the purpose of eligibility verification. While customer service calls are placed to gather feedback, greater effort should be made to use these calls as additional verification of eligibility rolls and they should be documented accordingly.
 - *Metro routinely calls customers to verify paratransit eligibility. It appears this was not clearly understood by the reviewers.*
- Sections of the City of Madison website (and other public information materials) should feature the universal handicap icon for better visibility and customer association.
 - *City Information Systems department completed an upgrade of city websites with uniform use of the handicap icon.*
- Metro Plus Paratransit is not currently tracking the outcomes of registered customer

complaints. For both customer service (i.e., providing responses to customers and following through on corrective actions) and internal monitoring of the effectiveness of complaint responses, Metro Plus should track these outcomes in the same database used to track and assign incoming complaints.

- *Metro is tracking the numbers of complaints per driver and provider to follow up with corrective action.*
- As identified in the previous audit, increased travel training can help Metro encourage more ADA paratransit riders to use the fixed route bus system. The current Paratransit Schedule Coordinator has received training from the National Transit Institute to assist with eligibility certification and conduct more in-person reviews. Additional consideration should be given to providing travel training or seeking a qualified organization in the Madison area that can perform this service.
 - *Metro assists Dane County Human Services with annual passes for Paratransit eligible customers that complete travel training for fixed route service. The program is funded through a New Freedom grant.*

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

Federal Transit Administration – Triennial Review 2013

Metro had no paratransit findings from its Federal Transit Administration review.