
METRO PARATRANSIT PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT

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

FROM: Crystal Martin, Paratransit Program Manager

DATE: 7/30/10

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, Americans with Disabilities Act (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 Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Management audit of 2009, and the Federal triennial review completed in April 2010.

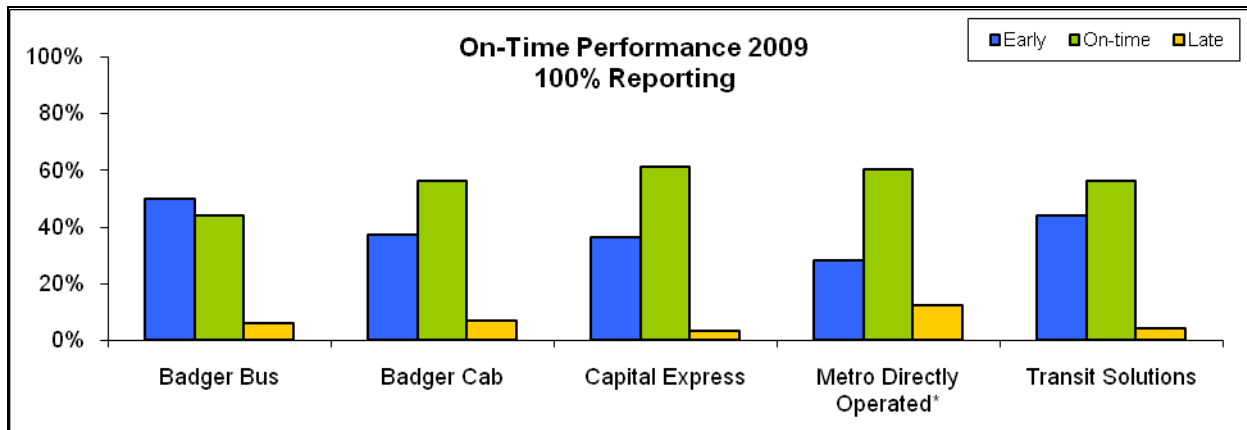
ADA Service Standards

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 for which the service vehicle arrives 21 or more minutes after the requested pick up time.

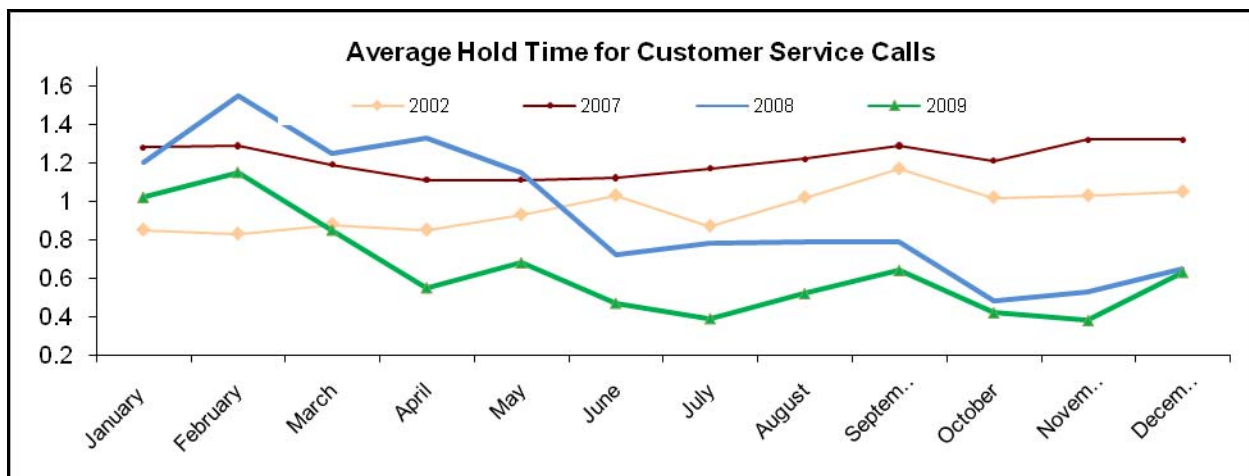
Metro captures performance data from all contracted trips and directly operated trips in the software database. Metro's paratransit vendors began reporting completed trip data electronically in January 2006. Vendor supplied data is compared to passengers' late trips reports for accuracy. Metro's directly 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.



Total Early or On-Time performance was: Badger Bus 94%, Badger Cab 93%, Capitol Express 97%, Metro 88%, and Transit Solutions at 96%.

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 2009, Metro recorded 882 Late Ride reports from paratransit customers. That represents .3% of performed rides compared to .06% in 2008. 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 (FTA) 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, the phone system was no longer able to track abandoned calls and, in general, the data has become increasingly unreliable. At the same time, average call wait times were increasing to over 1 minute and call volume has continued to increase. Metro switched to a new and updated phone system with increased reporting and tracking capabilities in October 2008. Then, in early 2009, Metro hired a customer service supervisor with certification and extensive experience managing a call center. The new phone system provided tools for the new supervisor to improve call consistency and efficiency. As a result, Metro has improved its call response time to levels prior to 2002. 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.

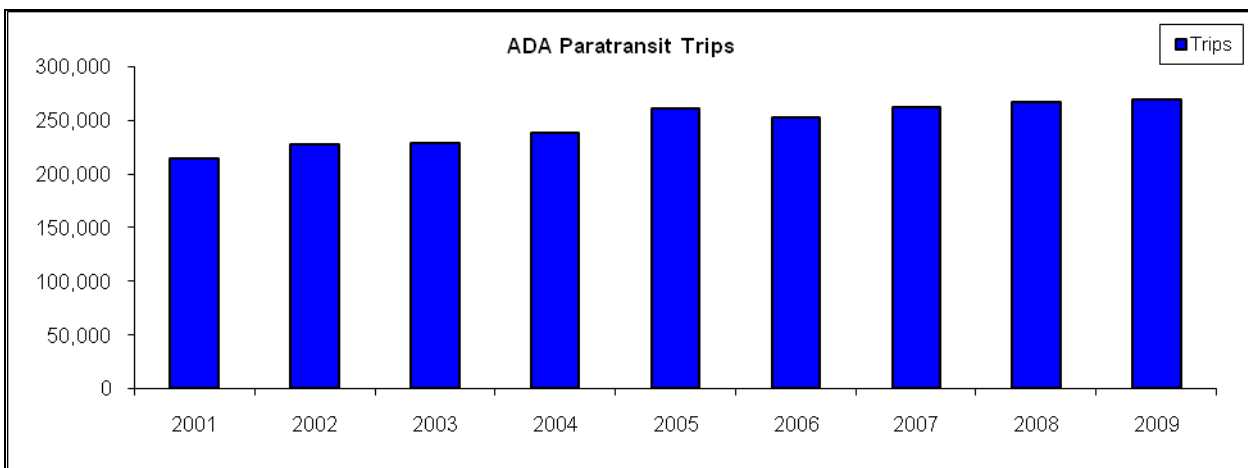
Eligibility Process Metro processed an average of 48 new applications each month for paratransit service in 2009. Customers may request an application by calling the Customer Service Center or downloading it from Metro’s website. Applicants are notified, in writing, of their determination within 21 days 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. 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 specialists’ networks to provide these types of services to transit utilities. 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’s 2010 customer recertification is in progress. The next re-certification year will be in 2013.

Service Area Metro is overdue for a review of paratransit service boundary compliance. 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 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. 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.

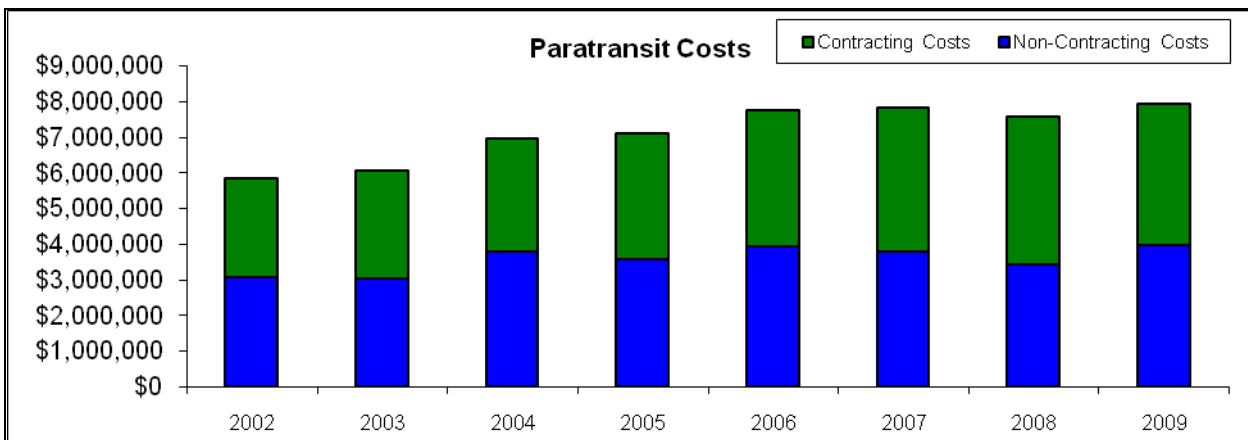
Performance Indicators

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 22,500 trips each month for people with disabilities. In 2009, ADA paratransit ridership increased 1.0% (2,155 trips). This compares to an increase of 2.3% (6,046 trips) in 2008.

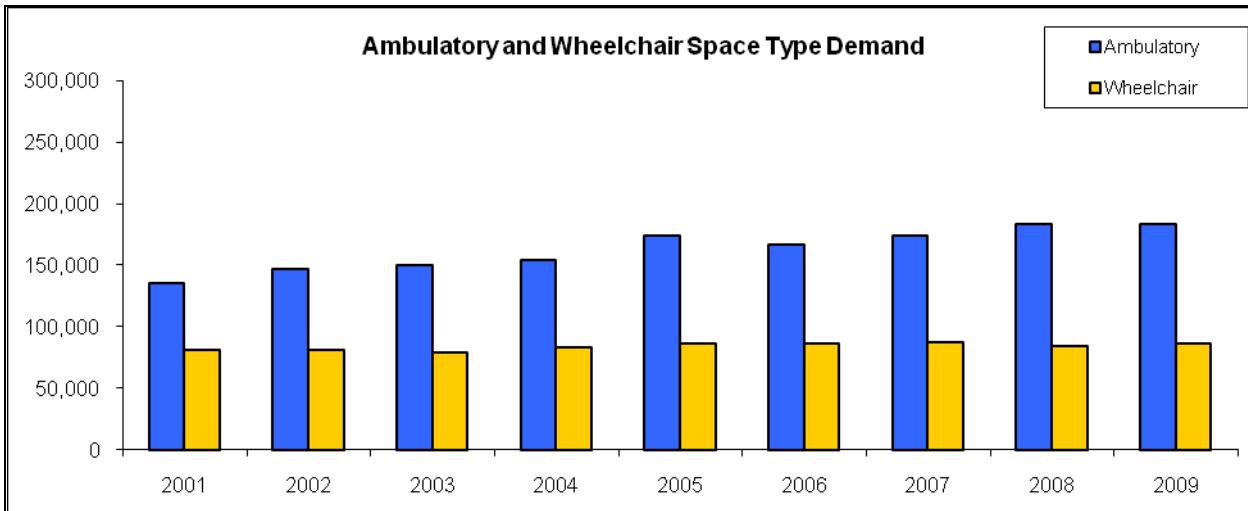


The number of unduplicated persons that requested paratransit trips increased by 82 individuals in 2009. Meanwhile, the average trips per customer also decreased to 145.6 in 2009 compared to 151.1 in 2008.

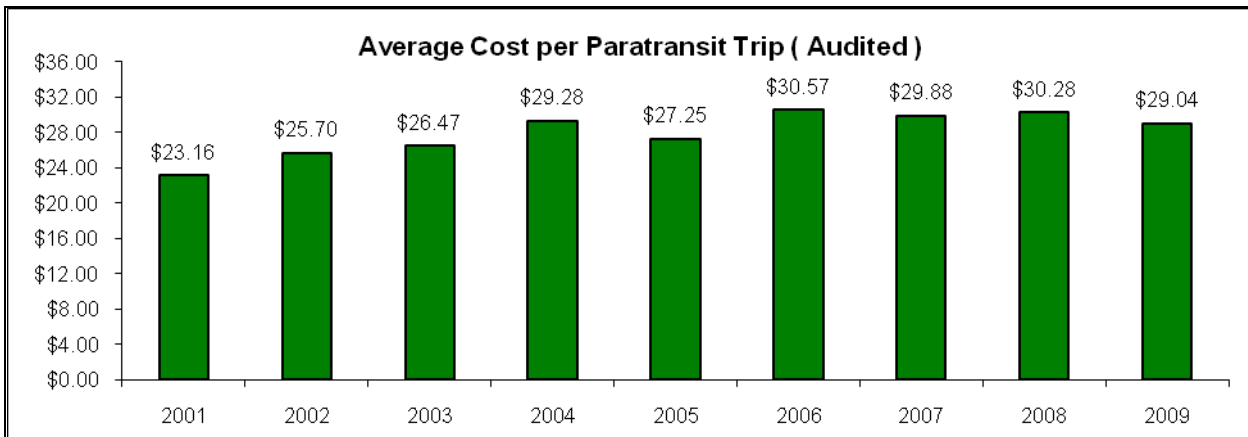
A significant portion of the cost of paratransit service is for contracting other companies to provide trips. The remaining cost is for directly-operated paratransit service, call center expenses, and administration. The program costs adjust annually to accommodate both growth in ridership and variable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



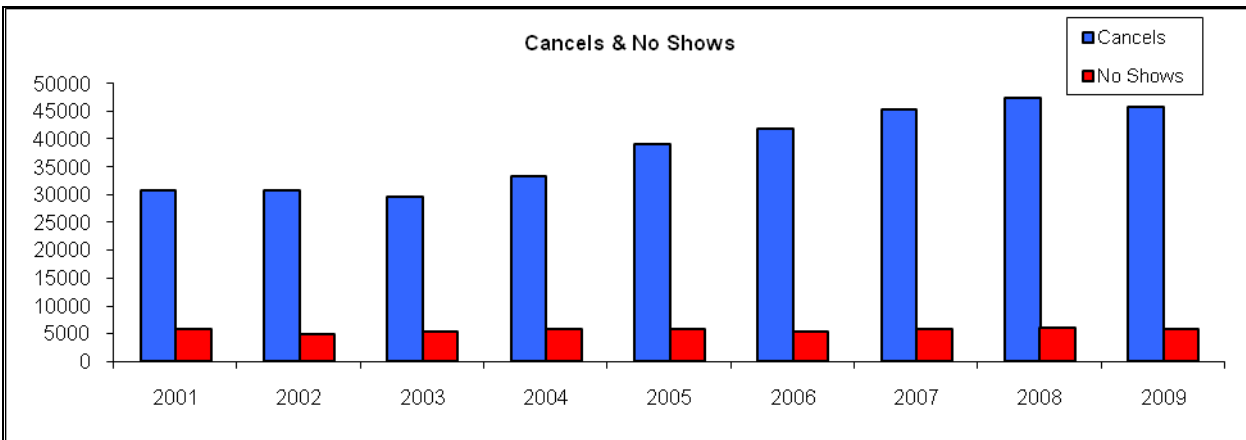
When breaking out the service requests by those requesting accessible vehicles (wheelchair space request) and those that can be accommodated by sedans (ambulatory), the trend of higher ambulatory demand continues compared to wheelchair type space requests. While the growth of ambulatory space type requests usually outpace wheelchair type requests, that was not the case in 2009. Ambulatory space type requests grew by only .15% compared to a growth of 2.7% 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 2009 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 2009 compared to 1.82 in 2006. The Operations Unit set higher productivity goals for paratransit in mid – 2007 with sustainable results of 1.8 Trips per Hour in 2008 and 1.95 Trips per Hour in 2009.



The cancellation rate for 2009 was 17.1% compared to 17.7% in 2008. The no-show rate at the end of 2009 was 2.2%, about even with the previous year.

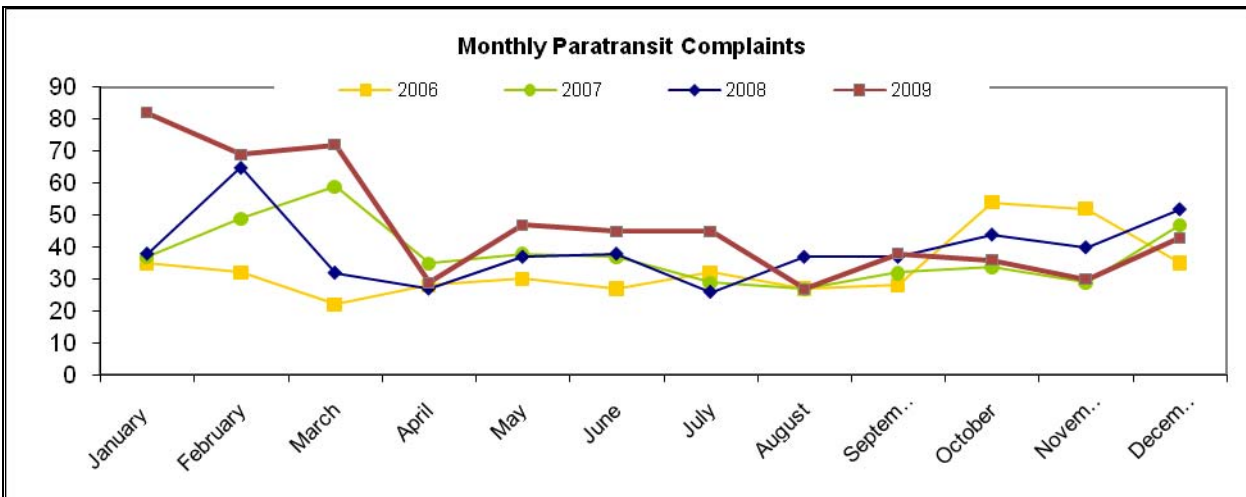


The feedback program data is generated by customer input, which allows Metro to track incidents, compliments, and complaints to be resolved. Monthly reporting began in July 2001, when Metro implemented the database to retain information. The program manager monitors feedback items for the paratransit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

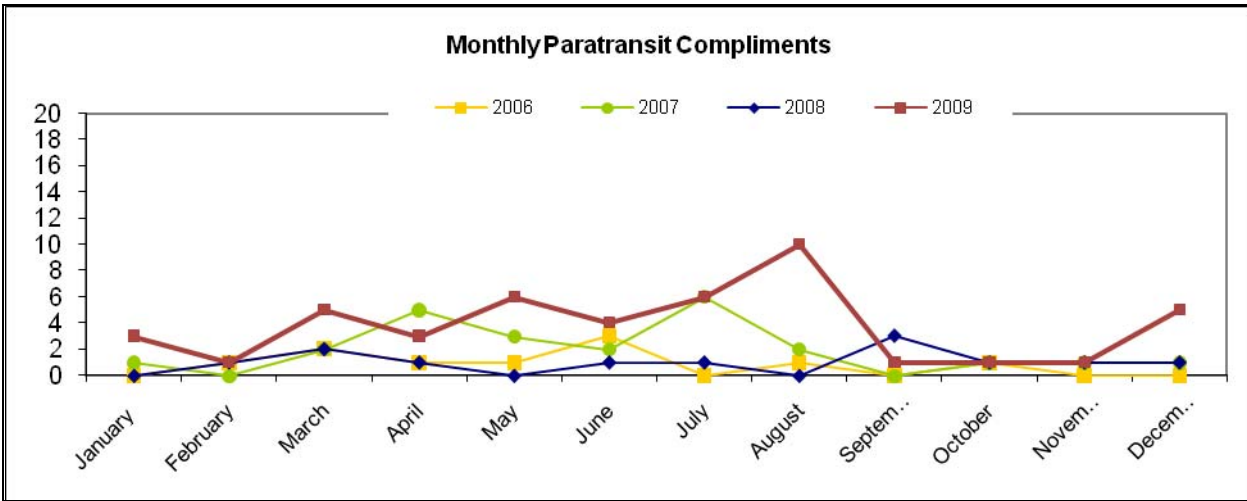
Incidents regarding service performed by vendors are forwarded for resolution. The vendor then communicates the resolution and customer contact to Metro for closure. Resolution may include callbacks or letters to customers. Late rides, leave attended status, and travel time issues were the leading concerns 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	2008	2009
	2.53	2.56	2.46	2.37	1.59	1.73	1.77	2.09



Complaints were up 19% from the previous year. **Compliments** were up 283% in 2009.



Contractors and Coordination Programs

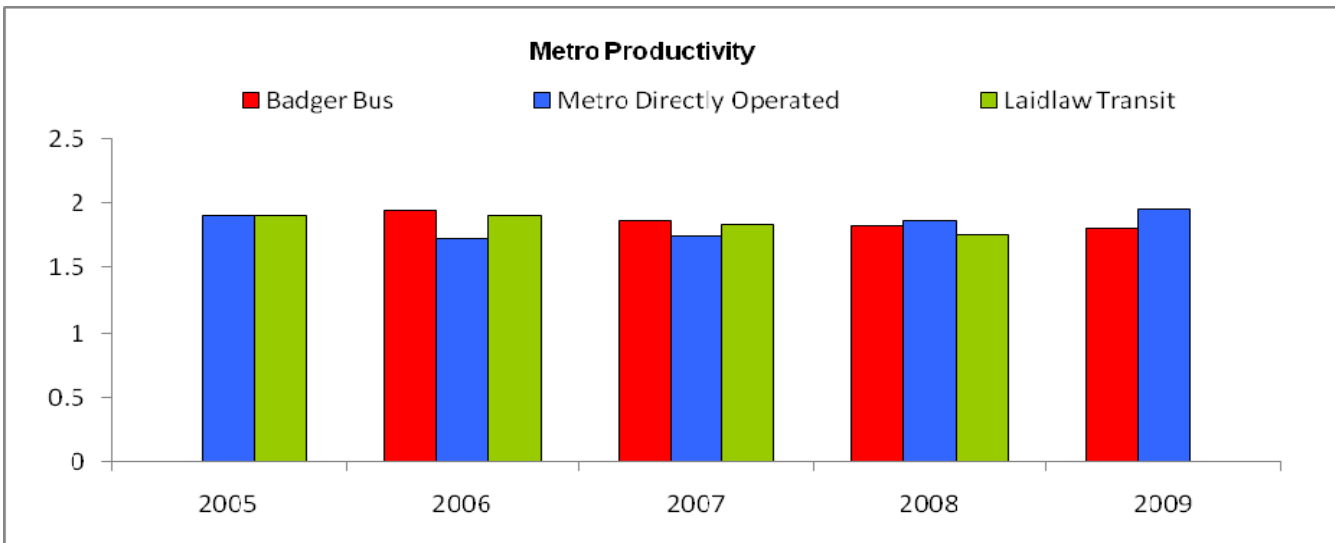
Contractors ADA Service 2009 had several changes. Metro did not exercise its option to continue Laidlaw/ First Transit because of cost. That part of the service was moved to Badger Bus Lines. Metro also contracted with Capitol Express Transportation for a small number of trips. Metro directly operated hours of service were down by .4% from the previous year. Accordingly, costs for contracted services exceeded budget; however, savings in salary and benefits also adjusted for a positive outcome.

2009 was the first year of two years of options for ADA paratransit services. Metro contracts with Badger Cab, Badger Bus Lines, Capitol Express, and Transit Solutions. Also, Badger Bus Lines is the contractor for a 3-year term for a Long-Term Assignment agreement. 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, ability to provide timely service, and low complaint record. 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. Badger Cab, Capitol Express 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		
Badger Cab	Company	Trip
Badger Bus (Long-Term Assignment)	Company	Trip
Transit Solutions	Company	Trip
Badger Bus	Metro	Hour
Capitol Express	Company	Trip

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. Since then, Metro staff have made steady improvements to schedules and in 2009 averaged 1.95 rides per hour. This equates to 2 additional rides per day, per driver. At an average of almost \$30 per ride, the savings from not having to contract for the rides is about \$147,000 annually.



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 has resulted in expanded coordinated activities with the county and other entities that authorize Medicaid transportation.

Expanded programs include Medicaid Common Carrier transportation for individuals whose medical transportation only is funded. Metro and the county have been able to determine on a trip-by-trip basis which trips are eligible for funding meaning that the customer does not pay a fare for those trips. The trips are then reported to the county for reimbursement from the state. Another program started in February 2009 with Care Wisconsin, Inc. is similar in that we are able to determine on a trip-by-trip basis which trips are eligible for funding and Care Wisconsin draws down the funding to reimburse Metro. These expanded programs have provided almost \$200,000 in funding for paratransit services. Individuals served by these programs save out-of-pocket expenses for Metro fares when they are not able to find a specialized medical vehicle company to provide Medicaid transportation.

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 2009	Retired Senior Volunteer Service	Group Access Service	Exceptional-Rides	Medicaid Waiver	Medicaid Common Carrier	Care Wisconsin (Medicaid)
Service Provider	County Contracts Out	County Contracts Out	County Contracts Out	Metro Plus	Metro Plus	Metro Plus
One-Way Trips	21,016	20,077	7,511	157,973	3,629	2,319
City (Expense)/ Revenue	(\$ 65,909)	(\$ 143,222)	(\$ 43,000)	\$2,971,000	\$ 111,000	\$ 70,969
% City Funding	39%	44%	41%	41%	0%	0%

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. In January 2009, Metro began negotiating trip times for sheltered employment sites that were served at the same time by county dedicated transportation services to avoid duplication of efforts. This resulted 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. In Summer 2009, Metro and Dane County moved 12 riders from Metro Paratransit to more efficient Group Access Service for adult daycare transportation.

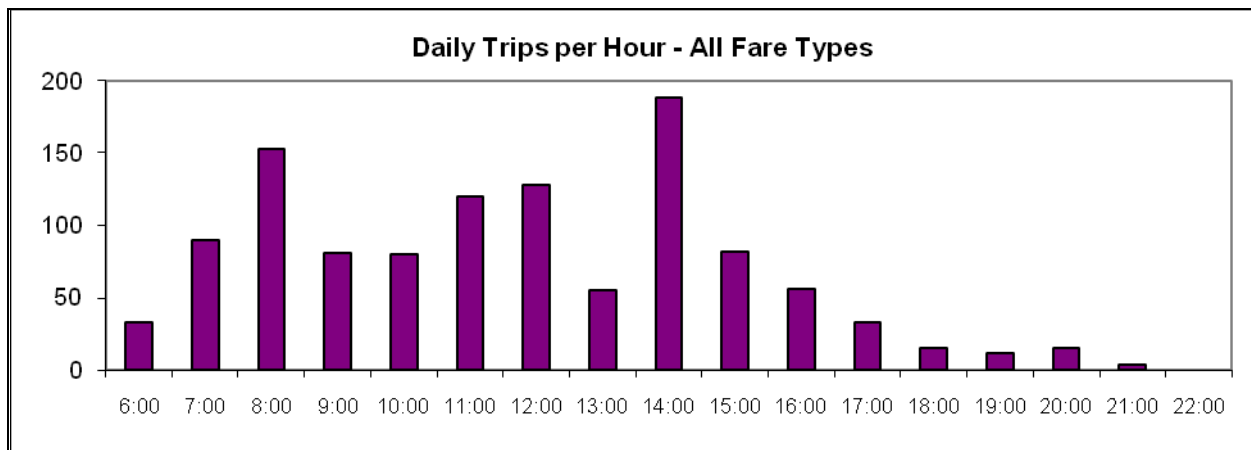
These efforts have improved efficiency and cost effectiveness in service delivery across programs. They have also restored balance to city and county roles in providing transportation services to people with disabilities.

ADA Transit Subcommittee (ADA TS)

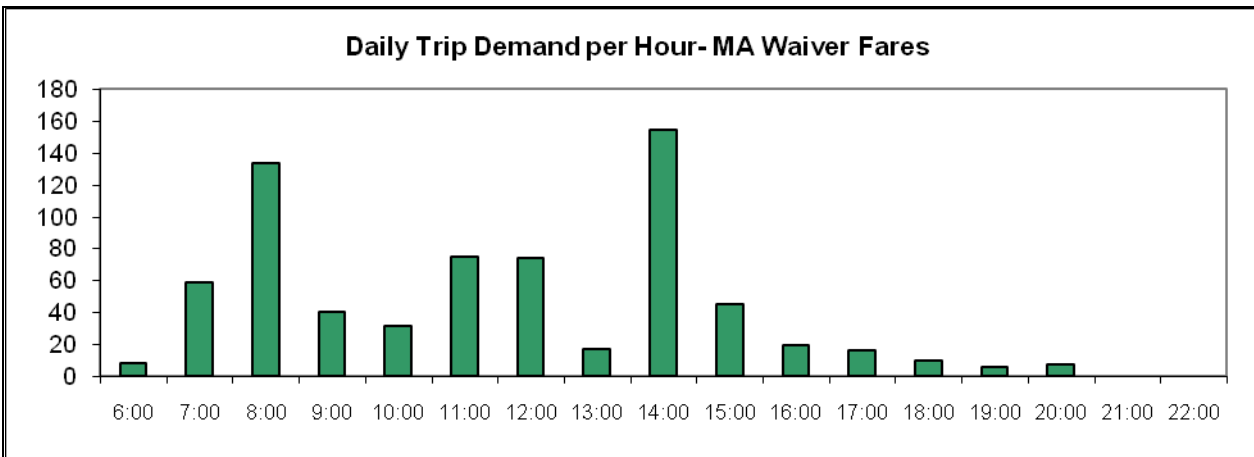
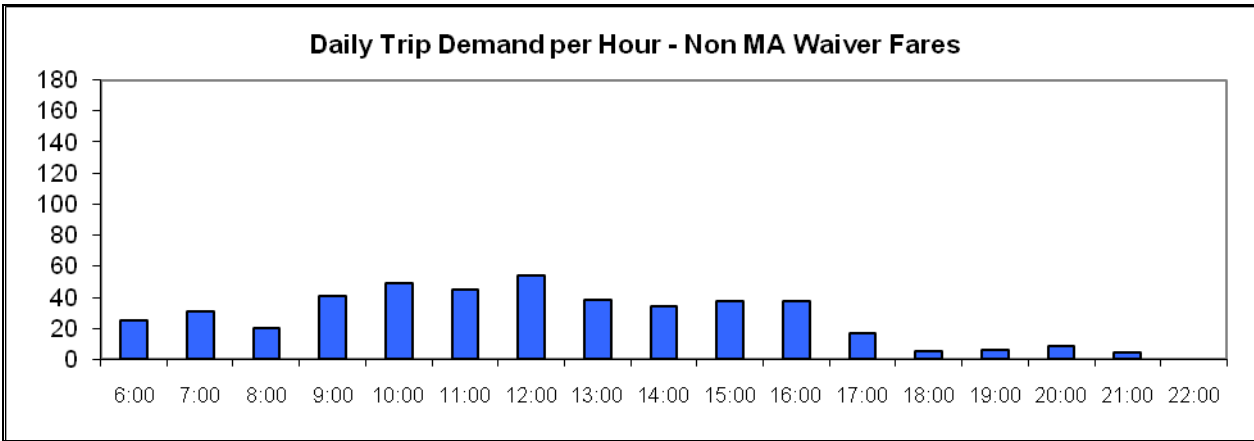
The Subcommittee attained quorum for all but one of its meetings in 2009. Alder Chris Schmidt was appointed in April 2009 to ADA TS.

The Subcommittee referred recommendations on several issues for accessible transportation services. Specifically: Elimination of peak / off peak fares, a plan to deal with duplication of services for facility-based programs coordinated with Dane County Human Services, amending the fare tariff to define and include Agency Fares, and an ordinance change to remove snow from bus stops and boarding platforms.

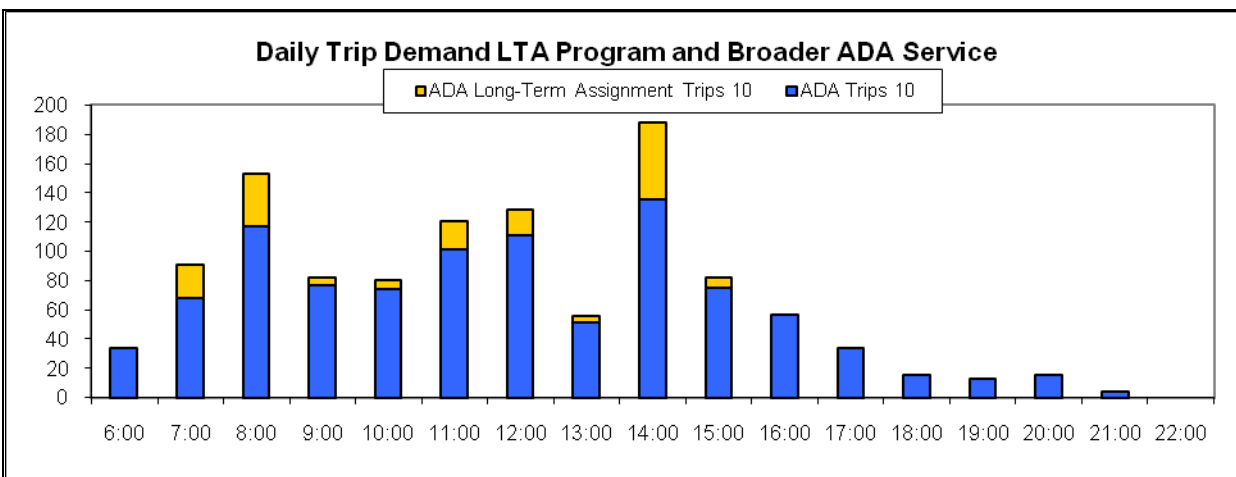
Of recurring interest to the Subcommittee is the trip demand analysis by time of day.



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 Medicaid (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, below.



Community Outreach

Metro's website now features audio accessibility for each page. Occu-Paws (service dogs) recently joined our training partners. Metro continued to offer training sessions to organizations such as the MS Support Group, WAGS (service dogs), vocational rehabilitation centers, and 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 system to communicate with our deaf and hard of hearing 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 is preparing an upgrade to the newest version of Trapeze Software. Expanded capabilities have the potential to resolve some scheduling challenges.

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. The manner in which Metro had been maintaining templates proved to be labor intensive and actively managing advance change information difficult. In 2007, staff worked on maintaining existing templates and developing a complete template schedule for driver schedules. These efforts were not successful. In 2008, Metro filled the Paratransit schedule coordinator position and rebalanced the job tasks with an emphasis on establishing and maintaining templates. As of June, 2010, 93% of all standing wheelchair space rides are templated. Ambulatory space ride are 62% templated. Standing schedules are maintained weekly. High levels of templated rides along with revised dispatch procedures for the day of service are leading factors for Metro's directly operated productivity increase (See page 7).

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 is planning 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.

- 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 is in discussion for a coordinated program with Dane County's mobility manager to fund a pilot program through a New Freedom grant. Discussion is around providing incentives for individuals to complete travel training and measure continued use of the transit system.*

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

Federal Transit Administration – Triennial Review 2010

Metro had two findings from its Federal Transit Administration review:

- The City takes reservations during normal business hours Monday through Saturday. On Sundays and holidays the reservation hours are reduced to 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. This period is not compatible with normal business hours.
 - *Effective July 1, 2010, Metro customer service opens at 9:00 a.m. on Sundays and Holidays to comply with this requirement.*

- The City provides four routes (81, 82, 84, and 85) at no fare as a result of funds received from the University of Wisconsin. Complementary paratransit service for the service area of these routes operates with the regular fare.
 - *Effective July 19, 2010, UW routes 81, 82, 84, and 85 will be free to students, staff, faculty, and visitors to the university **only**. Regular Metro fares apply to all other riders. This change means Metro Paratransit fares are compliant with this requirement.*