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## PROGRESS REPORT

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**TO:** City of Madison Transit & Parking Commission  
**FROM:** Crystal Martin, Paratransit Program Manager  
**SUBJECT:** **METRO PARATRANSIT PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT**  
**DATE:** 6/15/05

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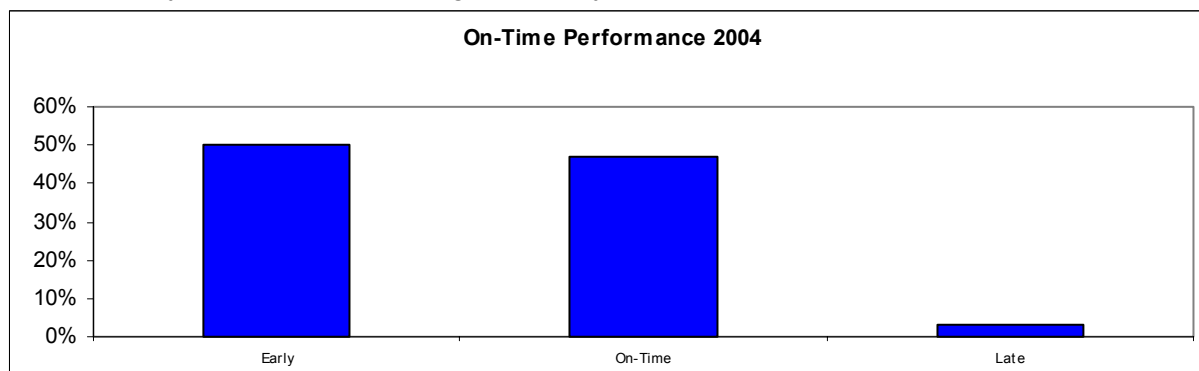
Metro's paratransit program (Metro Plus) provides ADA paratransit services as a complement to the fixed-route bus service. Individuals with disabilities who cannot access the fixed-route system because of their disability are eligible for paratransit with Metro. Although performance reports are provided 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 recommendations by the WisDOT Management Audit of 2004.

### ADA Service Standards

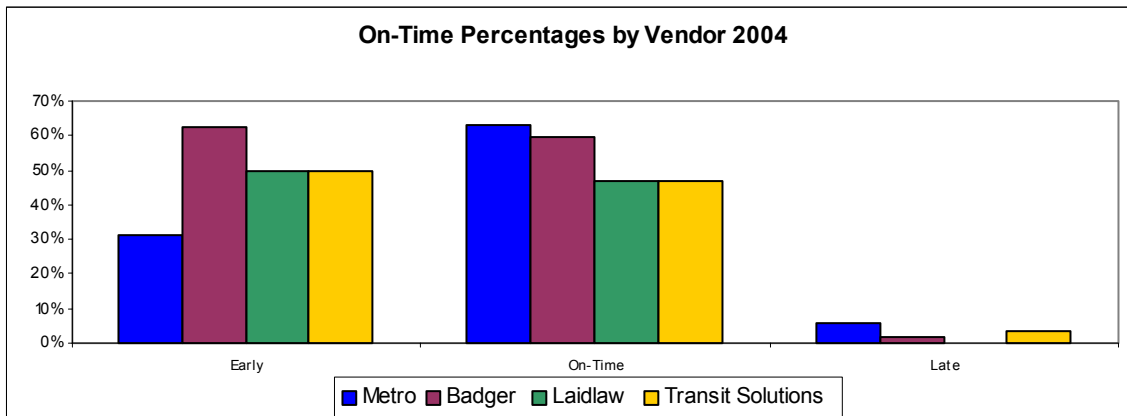
The paratransit program has several components that must be compliant with federal regulations. Those include: eligibility process, service area, response time, fares, days & hours of service, no prioritizing based on trip purpose, and no capacity constraints. This report is limited to the dynamic areas 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. In 2004, Metro supervisors observed all providers performing service and captured on-time performance data. 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. The results are illustrated below. Of the trips observed, 3.2% were late. Metro currently schedules approximately 1100 trips per average weekday.



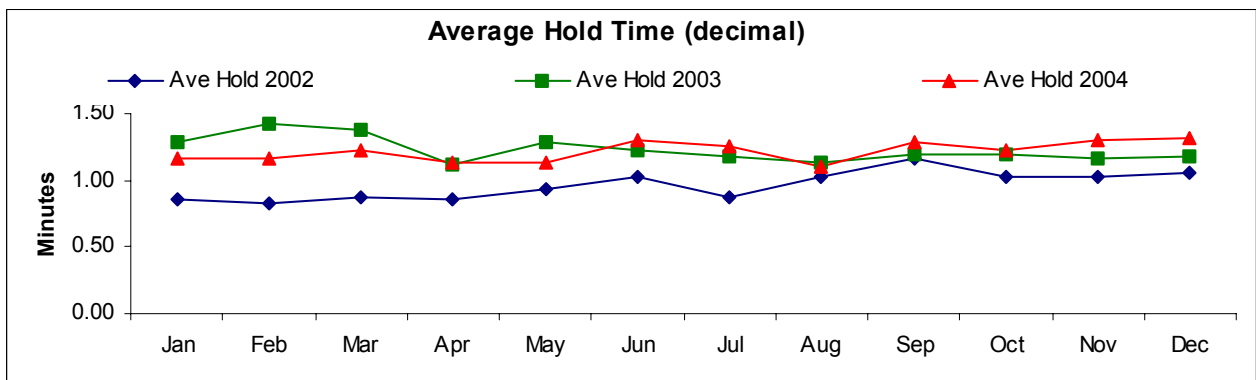
These results have also been broken down by provider. Note that the vendor which has received the most late reports by customers does not register as a significant figure in terms of the number of late trips observed by Metro supervisors. Metro directly observed 894 trips in 2004 compared to 1368 in 2003.



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 2004, Metro recorded 1984 Late Ride reports from paratransit customers. That represents .8% of the performed rides compared to .9% for 2003. In early 2005, Late ride reports spiked even though additional capacity was purchased to accommodate ridership growth.

**Phone System Capacity** Another area Metro monitors is the Customer Service Center and capacity of the phone lines to accommodate customers attempting to make trips requests. The Federal Transit Administration views this as an area where transit systems may limit capacity by limiting passengers' ability to request a trip. Metro's Customer Service Center serves all modes and its performance is charted below.

The chart indicates that nearly 10% more calls were answered in 2004 than in 2003 and that the number of abandoned calls dropped 51%. Also, the average time a person must wait on hold to reach a customer service representative is monitored.



Customer Service Representatives continue to participate in meetings to discuss timely policy and operational questions or clarifications about issues raised by customers.

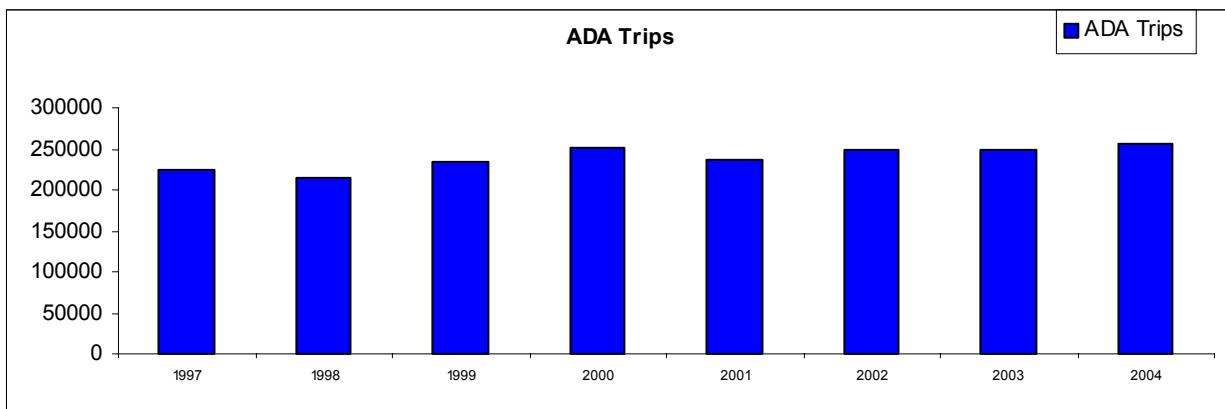
**Eligibility Process** Metro processes on average 35 new applications each month. Each applicant is notified of their determination within 21 days of receipt of a completed application. The information provided on some applications is not sufficient to make a determination without an in-person functional assessment. Metro contracts 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 February 2005, Metro completed an annual audit of ride bookings for the paratransit service area. The check indicated that several trips needed to be re-booked to be compliant. 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**

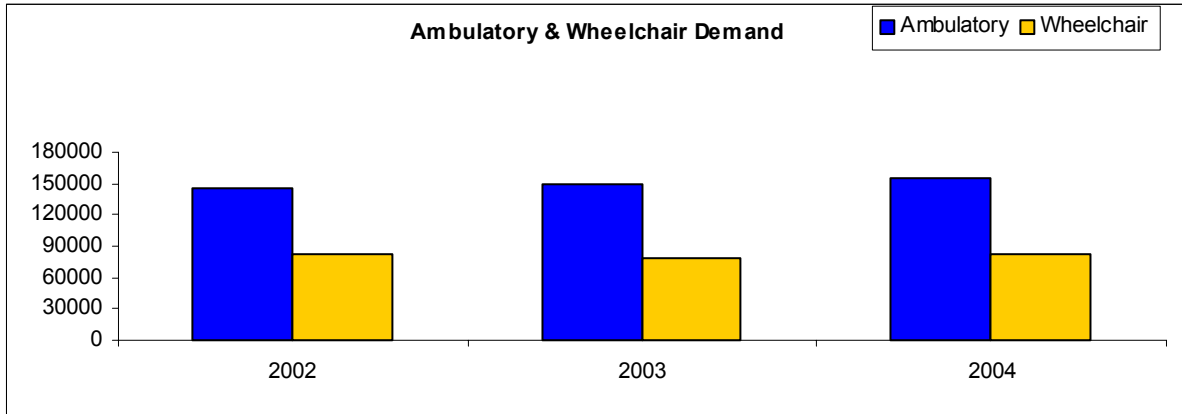
The TPC receives monthly reports on fixed-route and paratransit performance indicators. These include quantitative measures of the program’s effectiveness in delivering required services. Breakouts of the contracted services are included. Metro coordinates approximately 20,000 trips per month for people with disabilities. In 2004, ADA ridership grew by just over 8600 rides, 3.8 %. This is compared to growth of 1.0% the previous year.



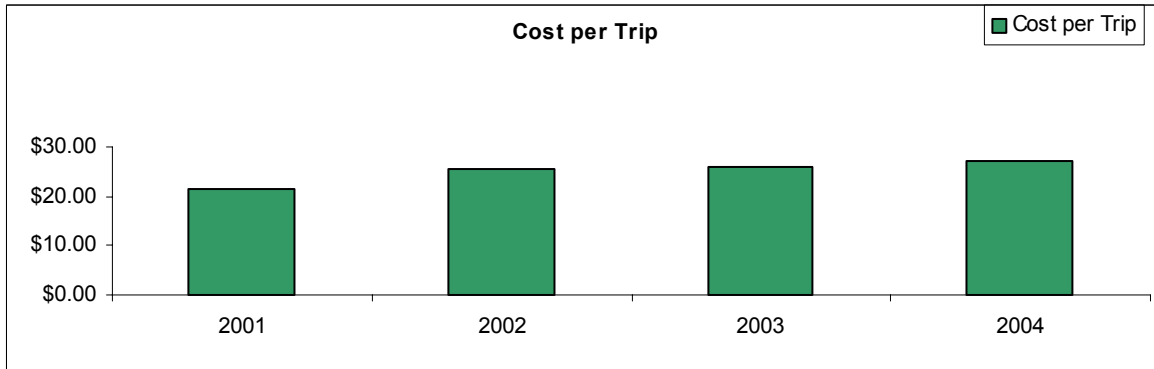
The number of unduplicated persons who requested paratransit trips increased by 72 individuals in 2004. Meanwhile the average trips per customer remained at almost 149 trips.

When breaking out the service requests by those requesting accessible vehicles (wheelchair space requests) and then those that can be accommodated by sedans (ambulatory), the trend of increased ambulatory demand continues while total requests for wheelchair accessible trips also climbed over the previous year. Ambulatory trips requests were up 3.0% (consistent with previous years) while wheelchair space requests surged up 5.4% after several years of static demand. For the prior year, 2003, the program reported ambulatory requests growth of 2.4% while wheelchair space requests declined 3.3%.

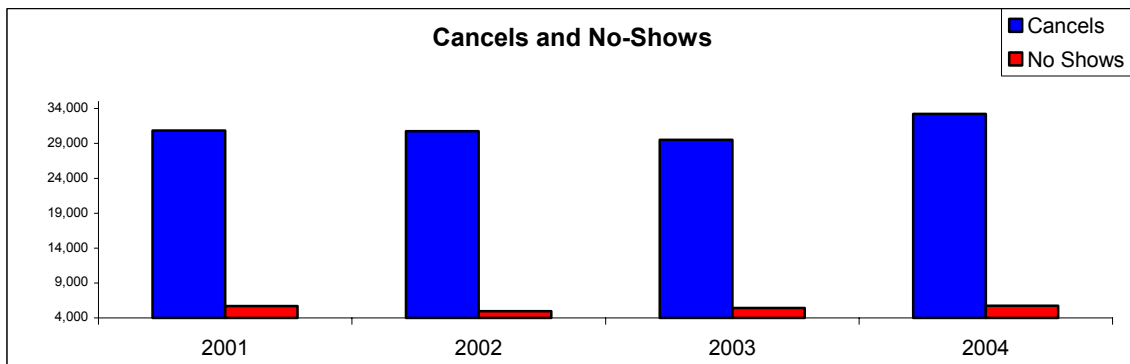
In comparing recent years’ demand for both ambulatory and wheelchair space types, there are also consistent seasonal changes in demand patterns.



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 2004 was consistent and reflected an annual increase in wages and purchased transportation. Overall productivity continues to hover at 1.82 rides per hour.



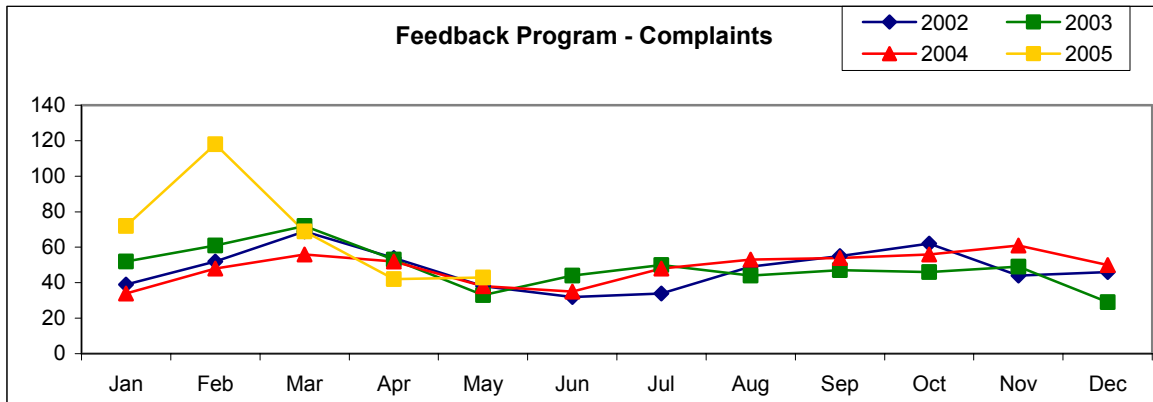
The cancellation rate for 2004 was 14%. This is an increase of 1% from previous years. The no-show rate at the end of 2004 was 2.4%, as it has been for the last 3 years.



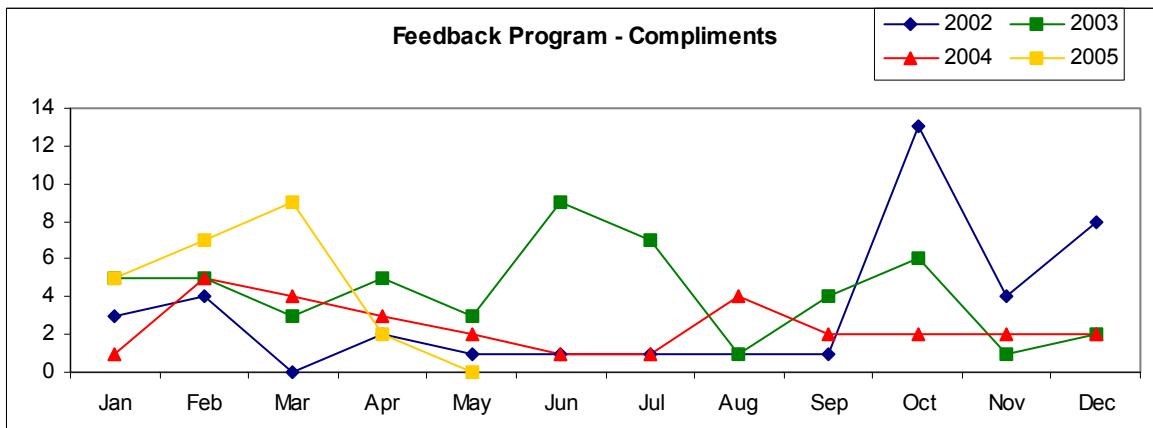
The feedback program data is generated by customer input, which allows Metro to track incidents, compliments, and formal complaints to be resolved. Monthly reporting began in July 2001, when Metro implemented the database to retain the information. Staff and consumer education is using the database has resulted in more diligent documentation for all units.

The program manager monitors feedback items for the paratransit unit. In 2004, Metro implemented new technology that included mobile data terminals (MDTs) in all Metro vehicles. This technology allows Metro supervisors to view vehicle movements on computer screens in real time and observe routes that are running off schedule. In paratransit, this has allowed for real time intervention to maximize schedule capacity and on-time performance. It has also provided significant resource in investigating late or missed trip reports.

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, provision of door-to-door service, and driver behavior continue to be the most common feedback items. In some cases, specific feedback items are document more than once.



Overall, the total number of complaints received for 2003 and 2004 remained the same.



### Contractors and Cooperative Programs

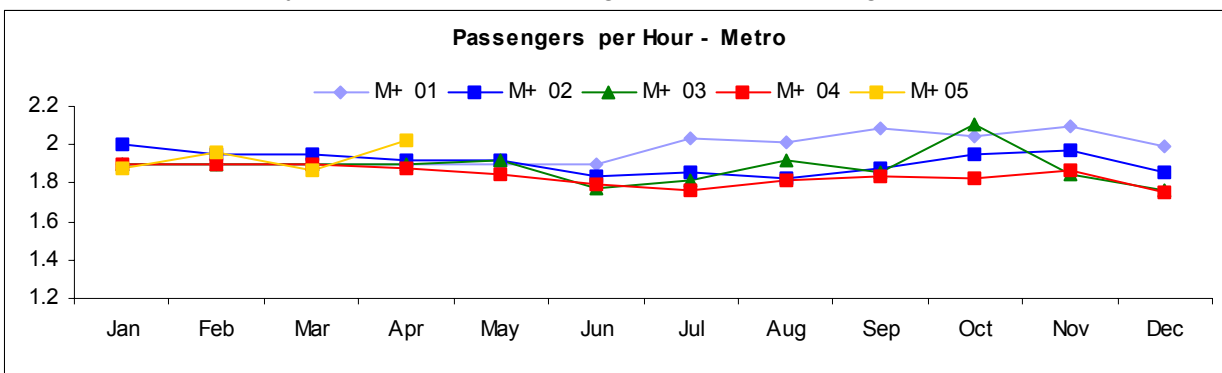
#### ADA Service

Metro contracts with 3 vendors perform ADA paratransit service: Badger Cab, Laidlaw Transit Services, and Transit Solutions, Inc.

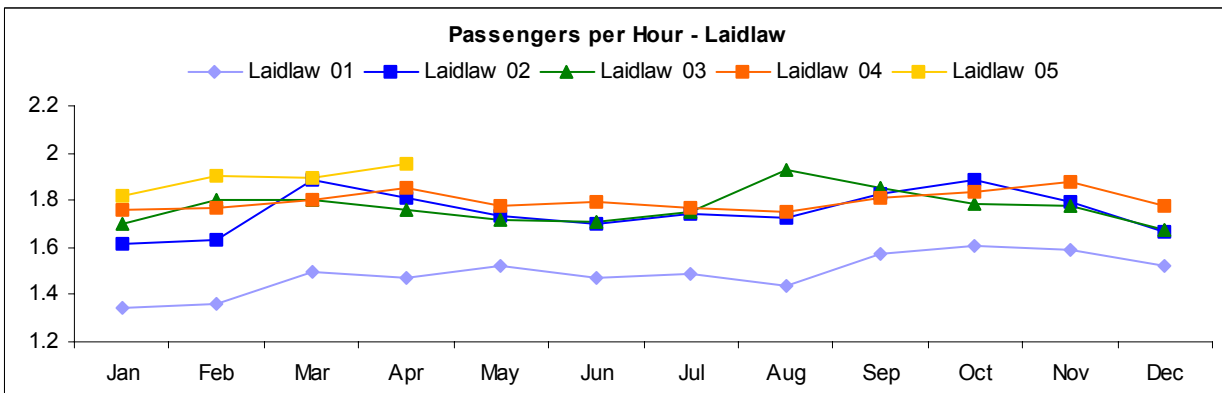
- Badger Cab:** Ambulatory capacity, compensated per trip
- Laidlaw Transit:** Wheelchair and ambulatory capacity, compensated per hour
- Transit Solutions:** Wheelchair and ambulatory capacity, compensated per trip

These vendors are currently in the last year of 5-year, non-exclusive contracts. Options were exercised for contracts years 2004 and 2005 with each vendor. Metro purchased additional capacity from its vendors in the fall of 2004 and early 2005 to accommodate increased ridership.

Transit Solutions performs a small number of trips for Metro because of its higher per trip costs. Badger Cab schedules and dispatches 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 cost per ride. Productivity is measured in passengers per hour in the graphs below.



Metro's directly operated vehicles have maintained fairly consistent productivity, however, the overall trend has been a steady decline. 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 to 1.84 trips per hour in 2004.



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 Waiver Program participants. In turn, Dane County is able collect reimbursement from the State and pass-through approximately 60% of the cost of the trip to Metro as opposed to the regular paratransit fare. In 2004, this program generated \$1,931,663 in revenue for Metro.

### **Other Services**

All annual paratransit contracting obligations for 2005 are current and up-to-date. Programs 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 are not considered ADA service.

<b>Programs 2004</b>	<b>RSVP</b>	<b>GAS</b>	<b>Ex-Rides</b>
One-Way Trips	14,981	18,913	9,276
City Funding	\$58,379	\$123,779	\$48,900

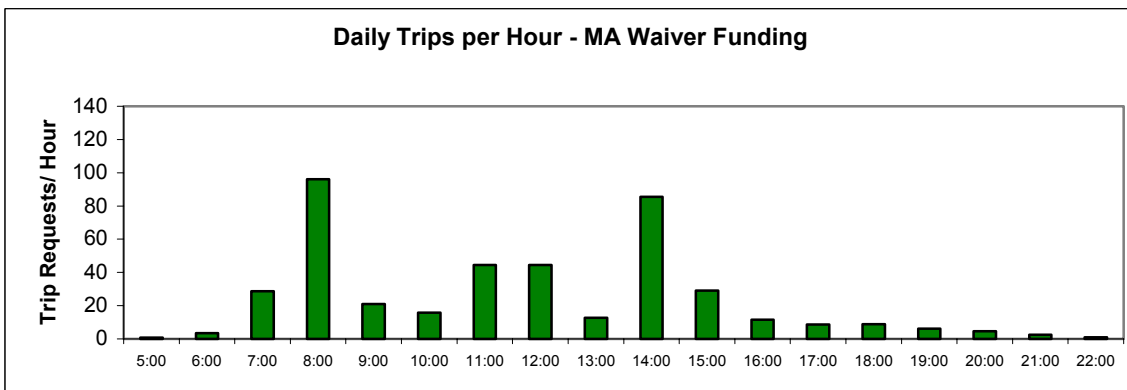
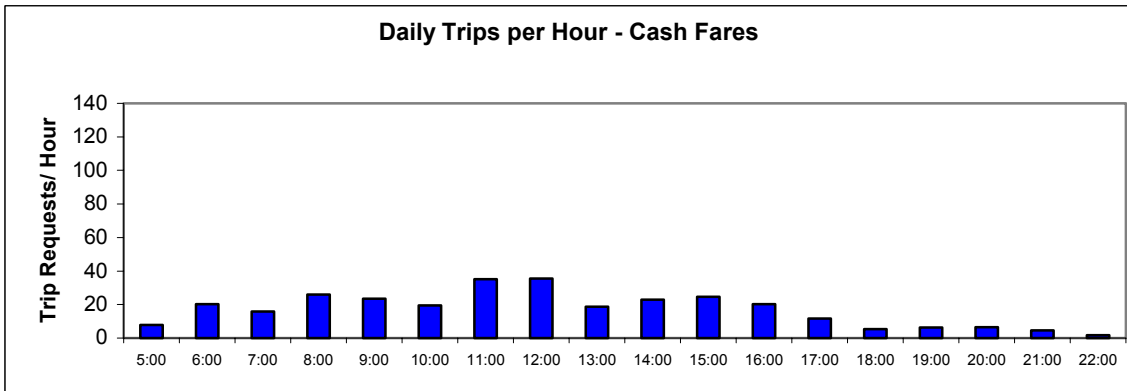
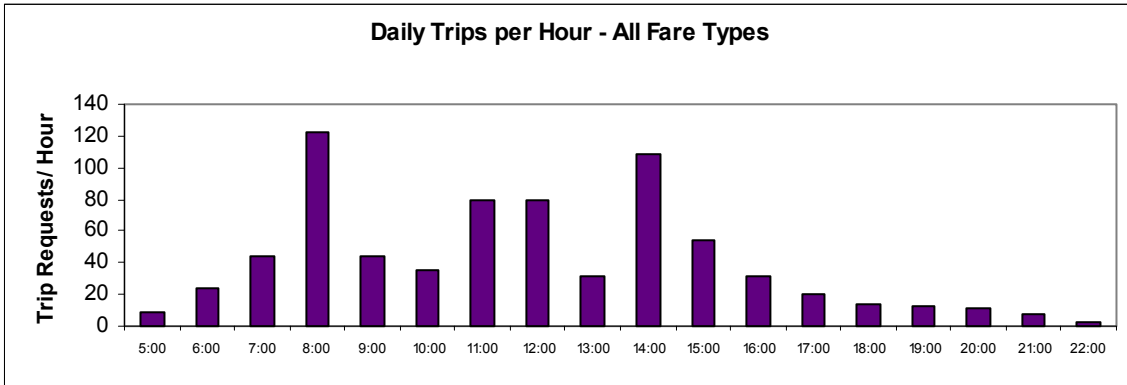
### **ADA Transit Subcommittee**

The ADA Transit Subcommittee maintained its ardent pace in 2004 and well into 2005. Early 2004 was dedicated to updating the Subcommittee's enabling language that is Madison General Ordinance 3.51(4)(k)1. The composition was updated to reflect the current constituency of the ridership and duties were updated to include outreach. As Metro has achieved the goal of an entirely accessible fixed-route fleet, the Subcommittee's new title also reflects their advisory role over not just ADA paratransit but also ADA fixed-route issues. The ordinance changed was approved by the Common Council and enacted April 6, 2005.

The Subcommittee reviewed polices on door-to-door service, guests and attendants, and made recommendations for the use of Segway Human Transporters on transit vehicles. Recommendations were accepted and approved by the Transit and Parking Commission.

In November 2004, Dane County staff provided updates for members on the MA Waiver funding program and County perspectives on developing specialized transportation contractors and service standards. Discussions on contractor performance standards recurred in April '04, November '04, December '04, and April '05. The Subcommittee also made recommendations for a pilot program, Long-Term Assignment, to address service consistency and efficiency issues. The Subcommittee continues to make recommendations based on qualitative and quantitative experience. Topics reviewed included: Metro's Strategic Plan, Metro Marketing's Strategic Plan, performance indicators, replacement vehicles, fare collection policies, and feedback issues.

Of re-occurring interest to the Subcommittee is the trip demand analysis by time of day. The peak/off-peak fare differential for paratransit efficiency effectively shifted 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 customers with the greatest peak hour demand are supported by the MA Waiver program and represent a significant portion of the ridership. The demand patterns are illustrated below.



### Community Outreach

All of Metro's paratransit informational and application materials are available in Spanish. Customers may purchase fare media at Metro, Metro outlets, and on-line. On-line sales continue to grow. Metro's outreach marketing grew in 2004 by offering training sessions to organizations such as WAGS – Wisconsin Academy of Graduate Service Dogs and by expanding our training program with Madison area senior centers and retirement communities.



### **Trapeze Software Optimization**

Metro's paratransit service is scheduled using Trapeze Software. Computerized scheduling helps manage a large number of trip requests. In the last year, Metro has up-graded to the next version of Trapeze and integrated mobile data terminals (MDTs) to the Metro fleet. The newest version of Trapeze provided only minor enhancements to the program. The MDTs 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 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. Staff is actively testing alternative means to template rides and achieve the same results for 2005.

### **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 is in the testing stages of implementing an internet data portal for contractors to report their trip performance back to Metro. The information will be transferred to the Trapeze database to create on-time performance reports identical to the reports that will be generated as a result of the MDT implementation.
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 recently updated its duties to include outreach.
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 has made it possible to have staff work later hours at the dispatch desk and take 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 schedule adherence and the road call rate.
  - a. The implementation of the MDTs for Metro service and the internet data portal for contractor service will allow Metro to create baseline statistics on current performance. 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. Metro staff has developed changes to the Request-for-Proposals for the next contracting period that are aimed at addressing this issue.

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