

**Mary F Redden**

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**From:** Louise Schilling [000schilling@ameritech.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 09, 2006 7:34 AM  
**To:** John Szerlag  
**Cc:** Brian P Murphy  
**Subject:** Emailing: printme

John and Brian,

Please provide City Council with this article and the rider figures for Troy for SMART. Thank you.

Louise

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# Two cities must decide on SMART system

Web-posted Jan 9, 2006

By CAROL HOPKINS  
Of The Oakland Press

Earl Oppertbauer, an 81-year-old Farmington Hills resident and former City Council member, would watch SMART buses regularly traveling through his city with few passengers.

"I saw empty buses," he said. Farmington Hills residents pay \$2.6 million a year in property taxes to have the service through the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation. Oppertbauer doesn't like it.

"It's always been my feeling when I was in government, whatever taxes you're paying, you ought to get your money's worth. (With SMART), I figured we're not getting our money's worth."

Oppertbauer even rode the buses and monitored the number of riders.

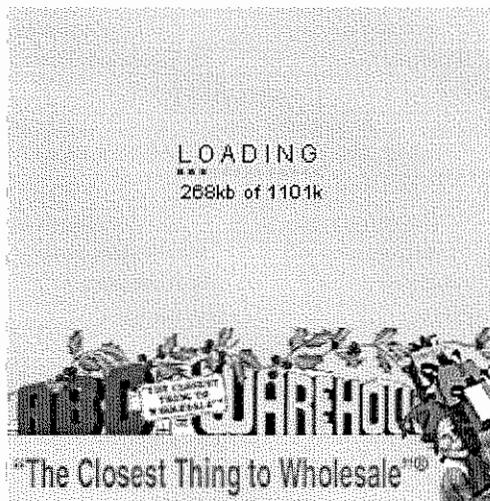
"(In Farmington Hills), you'd seldom see more than two or three on them," he said.

By the end of January, leaders in two Oakland County cities - Farmington and Farmington Hills - must decide whether to stay in or opt out of the SMART bus system.

If a community's legislative body decides to opt out of SMART, voters in that community would not see a SMART ballot question during the next election, said Kathy Dornan, Farmington Hills city clerk.

Both cities have participated in the system since the mid-1990s. SMART says 22 cities in

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Oakland County contribute to the system.

The move follows a vote last November, when the Farmingtons' southerly neighbor, Livonia, passed a transportation-related millage proposal that signaled the first step of that city withdrawing from SMART.

Farmington Hills City Councilman Ken Massey said that while SMART ridership in his city is low, estimates show 1,000 people a day on the main route, and he isn't ready to cancel the service.

"I'm in an information-gathering mode," he said. "Tax dollars are something our community needs to treat carefully; we need to get best value. My feeling is, if we're not getting value for our dollars, we should look at enhancing the system, reducing costs or looking at other options."

A second transit company - Southfield-based Parastar Emergency Systems Inc. - is offering to provide transportation in the two cities for less cost, Massey said.

"That's been the controversy," Massey said. "We have a private provider saying, 'We can do this for less money.' They're giving us an option to consider, and Livonia is talking to them, as well."

Farmington city officials plan to hold a public forum to talk about SMART sometime in mid-January before voting to stay in or opt out toward the end of the month.

SMART officials estimate about 1,000 people a day ride the buses in each city.

"We're working very closely with the Farmington Hills City Council," said Beth Gibbons, SMART's public relations manager. "We're having good dialogue."

The bus system is not talking about taking less money from the communities, Gibbons said.

"No, that's not an option. We may need to revise routes and services. This is an offer we make to all communities."

She said no other Oakland County communities had approached SMART to opt out, but added that Walled Lake had inquired about joining.

Farmington Mayor JoAnne McShane is also taking a cautious approach.

"There are a lot of people who depend on SMART, and we don't want to take away opportunities to work and get to where they need to go.

"I think we would not pull out unless there were cost-effective alternatives that could work in unison with surrounding communities."

Opperthausen, a former general counsel with Grand Trunk Railroad, hopes city officials ultimately agree with him.

He concluded: "(At the railroad), we didn't run mile-long trains when two cars would suffice. I want to see the city make a study of what the need really is and to service that need with smaller buses run by the city, not by SMART."

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Farmington and Farmington Hills city officials will conduct a public forum to discuss whether to stay in or opt out of SMART sometime in mid-January. Call (248) 871-2410 or visit [www.ci.farmington-hills.mi.us](http://www.ci.farmington-hills.mi.us) for the time and date.

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# SMART Fact Sheet Services in Troy

## SMART transit services take three forms. Troy has all three.

1. **Fixed Route.** Traditional large bus service. Eight bus routes directly serve Troy. Twenty three communities are accessible by bus without transfers. Most communities in the SMART service area are accessible with one transfer. Oakland Mall and Somerset Collection are SMART service hubs.
2. **Connector.** SMART operates several “curb to curb” services using small buses.
  - a. Troy-Birmingham Dial a Ride. Providing service anywhere within Troy, Birmingham and Beverly Hills.
  - b. Big Beaver Job Express. From the Somerset Collection (south side) offers rush hour shuttles from the fixed route to workplaces along Big Beaver.
  - c. Oakland Mall Job Shuttle. From Oakland Mall offers shuttle service to the eastern part of Troy, including Rochester Road and Stephenson Highway.
3. **Community Transit.** In Troy, SMART provides operating dollars, vehicles, computer scheduling software and technical assistance for Troy Medi-Go Plus.

## Target Market

SMART targets three primary ridership markets: 1) entry level workers (retail, service workers, restaurants); 2) seniors; and 3) persons with disabilities. SMART also provides service for commuters to Wayne State University, the Detroit Medical Center and downtown Detroit, as well as Auburn Hills.

## Ridership

Overall, SMART’s ridership has increased 25% since the previous millage vote in 2002. Due to its concentration of jobs, stores and restaurants, Troy continues to be a major destination for many of SMART’s riders, both from Detroit and Macomb County and Oakland County suburbs.

SMART does not track ridership on its fixed route buses by community. Logging where each rider gets on and off the bus (with an average systemwide daily ridership of 35,000) is not practical. However, total ridership is counted by route. For the eight fixed routes serving Troy, the combined daily ridership is approximately 7400 riders. Almost without exception, Troy is the predominant origin or destination on each of those routes.

An estimate of daily ridership specific to Troy is well **over 2,000 riders per day**. However, specific surveys would be needed to achieve a definite number. Surveys done in both Livonia and Farmington Hills confirmed approximately 1000 riders per day for each of those communities. Troy's ridership can be expected to be significantly higher due to the following: a) the combined total ridership on routes serving Troy far exceeds that for the other communities (7400 vs. 4000); b) neither community has a major mall that serves as a transit hub while Troy has two (Oakland Mall and Somerset) and c) Troy is geographically better situated for access to surrounding communities vs. Livonia and Farmington Hills which lie on the edge of the SMART service area.

### **Millage Cost**

SMART's millage rate is 0.6. The average household in Troy pays about **\$74 per year** to support SMART. Combined, the total millage revenue SMART receives from Troy is approximately **\$3.1 million**.

### **SMART Expenditures**

The expenses incurred by SMART for services provided to Troy exceed the millage revenue received. This is possible because SMART adds federal and State dollars to the millage revenues to cover capital and operating expenses. SMART expenditures for services directly benefiting Troy exceed **\$4 Million** per year.

# Summary of SMART Services in Troy

[www.smartbus.org](http://www.smartbus.org)

Phone: (866) 962-5515

## Fixed Route

<i>Route Name</i>	<i>Span of Service</i>	<i>General Description</i>
430 Main Street	Monday - Friday, 5 am to 8 pm	Somerset Collection to Royal Oak Transit Center
460 Woodward Local - Somerset	Monday - Friday, 4:30 am to 2:30 am; Saturday, 5 am to 1 am; and Sunday, 6 am to 10 pm	Somerset Collection to Downtown Detroit
465 Woodward Limited - Northfield Hills/Auburn Hills	Monday - Friday, 4 am to 8 am & 2:30 pm to 7 pm	Downtown Detroit to Auburn Hills
475 Woodward Limited - Troy Civic Center	Monday - Friday, 6 am to 9 am & 4:30 pm to 7 pm	Troy Civic Center to Downtown Detroit
494 Dequindre	Monday - Friday, 6 am to 12:30 am; Saturday, 6:15 am to 12:30 am	Big Beaver/Dequindre to State Fair
495 John R	Monday - Friday, 4:45 am to 12:15 am; Saturday, 6:30 am to 12 am	Oakland Mall to Downtown Detroit
760 Fourteen Mile	Monday - Friday, 5 am to 8:45 pm; Saturday, 5:30 am to 7:30 pm	13 Mile/Telegraph to Macomb Mall
780 Fifteen Mile	Monday - Friday, 5 am to 10:30 pm; Saturday, 6 am to 9 pm	Maple/Orchard Lake to Macomb Mall

## Connector

<i>Connector Service</i>	<i>Span of Service</i>	<i>General Description</i>
Troy Dial-A-Ride	Monday - Friday, 6 am to 5 pm	Same day curb-to-curb service in Troy, Birmingham, and Beverly Hills.
Big Beaver Job Express	Monday - Friday, 6 am to 10 am & 2:30 pm to 6 pm	Flexible curb-to-curb service designed to get customers to/from destinations along Big Beaver between Somerset Collection and Livernois.
Oakland Mall Job Express	Monday - Friday, 7 am to 10 am & 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm	Flexible curb-to-curb service designed to get customers to/from destinations between Oakland Mall and Meadowbrook Plaza.
The American's with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA)	Based on Fixed Route Service	Curb-to-curb advanced reservation service for people, who due to a disability, are prevented from using fixed route service.

*(See reverse side for Community Transit Service)*

## Community Transit

<i>Community Transit Service</i>	<i>Span of Service</i>	<i>General Description</i>
Troy Medigo Plus (248) 457-1100	Monday - Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm	Door-to-door, advanced reservation, service for senior & disabled residents. Service boundaries are 11 Mile south, Mound east, Southfield Road west, and University Road north.

SMART provides direct connections between Troy and twenty-four other communities with its fixed route bus service. The following list are communities that can be accessed directly (no transfer required) from Troy by using SMART fixed route buses. Numerous other communities are also accessible with just one transfer.

Auburn Hills  
Berkley  
Beverly Hills  
Bingham Farms  
Birmingham  
Bloomfield Township  
Clawson  
Clinton Township  
Detroit  
Ferndale  
Fraser  
Hazel Park  
Highland Park  
Huntington Woods  
Madison Heights  
Pleasant Ridge  
Pontiac  
Roseville  
Royal Oak  
Southfield  
St. Clair Shores  
Sterling Heights  
Warren  
West Bloomfield

