

Hills turns the spotlight on taxicab service

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 prove handicapped service, Potter said.
 When SEMTA allocates program money, Livonia, in turn, subcontracts with the taxi company, which provides curb-to-curb service. The transportation service covers 108 square miles.
 The service is available to anyone 65 years of age and older, as well as handicapped residents of the participating communities. Fares vary depending on length of trip but eligible program users pay reduced fares.
 Under the system's operation, shared rides are encouraged. That also affects fares charged. But

shared rides also mean an elderly person who wants to be taken to Mercy Center's senior programs on 11 Mile and Middlebelt may have to wait until other users call and ask for a ride in that same location or direction, Potter said.
 "There has been no attempt during the last few years to correlate" the transportation system with community programs attended by the elderly and handicapped, Potter said.
 IN ANALYZING the transportation program, thought was given to the possibility of Farmington and Farmington Hills bowing out of the program. The question remains of

what could be done to replace the service.
 Potter told council he's unsure whether there are transportation companies that could provide enough available taxi cabs for use in Farmington and Farmington Hills, especially based on user reports from the taxi company.
 Based on the month of July, Potter found that Farmington and Farmington Hills ridership was responsible for 1,045 of the total 2,788 rides during the month. That means one-third of the rides originated or ended in Farmington and Farmington Hills.
 In a breakdown of the Farmington/Farmington Hills ridership, Potter found that 187 individuals were responsible for the area's total

rides. Of that total, 166 individuals used the system 10 times or less. Eighteen individuals used it 11-20 times; 13 individuals 21 times and 1 person used it 42 times, Potter said.
 Of the total Farmington/Farmington Hills rides, 483 were to residences; 187 to banks or shopping; 142 to miscellaneous or undetermined places; 102 to work or school (mostly for handicapped people); 82 to Mercy Center; 61 for medical purposes and 28 to restaurants.
 ACCORDING TO company manager Peterson, Potter said, the taxi service provided 37,000 rides to elderly and handicapped people under the subsidized program in 1985. Of the total, about 35 percent of the rides were to or from Farmington and Farmington Hills.

To illustrate a problem with too few cabs and drivers, Potter referred to the taxi company's daily log sheets.
 For example, on Friday, Feb. 7, 1986, from 8 to 9 a.m., 18 cabs were available; 22 calls were received; 18 calls were put on hold; and five of the calls were for the subsidized transportation program.
 At the end of the hour, the dispatcher requested four additional cabs. During the same day, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., the number of

cabs needed, but unavailable, varied between three and eight, according to company records.
 "A review of Northwest Transport Co.'s daily ridership logs will reveal that there are critical times during a day's operation at which time the cab company is in need of more vehicles and drivers on the road," Potter said in his report to council.
 "This lack of vehicles and/or drivers contributes greatly to the slow response problem," Potter continued.

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Brotherton speaks out

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He believes the political aura around the state's Public Service Commission may soon dissolve. "We may end up with a real bill if the price of oil stays where it is," he said.
 Looking at education and recent legislative proposals, Brotherton sees "no problem with seniors being tested to see if they can graduate." He favors teacher certification of some sort.
 IN THE area of judicial reform, Brotherton does not favor local district courts being funded by the state.
 "I feel we're spending too much money on things we wouldn't have spent it on years ago," he said, of the state's partial funding. "We haven't increased productivity. If the state pays for all the courts, we're going to become a lot less efficient."
 Looking at the juvenile court system, Brotherton does not believe legislative reform at the state level will help. He believes only a change in individual attitudes will help curb juvenile crime.
 On the issue of state-funded abortions, Brotherton said, "I have always been against it."

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