If suburbanites want mass transit, they're going to have to ante up.
That's the message from the Submarban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation, operator of bus
routes in Wayne, Oakland and Matoomb counties.

SMART could cease operations as
soon as April due to a projected \$7.7
million deficie, officials said.

soon as April use on projected.

Finding delict, officials said.

While SMART seeks a merger with the profitable Detroit Department of Transporation bus system. There is no way in the world also seeks "dedicated revenue" from Wayne County is going to support

tation tax, city and township taxes, or direct contributions from local operating budgets.

"WE CAN'T say what form it would take," SMART vice chairman Matt Wirgau said. "We can't raise taxes ourselves; we don't have that

While supportive, Wayne County secutive Edward McNamara has

"There is no way in the world Wayne County is going to support taxes unless we're convinced the sys-

tem is efficient," said deputy county executive Michael Duggan, also a SMART vice chairman. Merging with Detroit is critical to making the suburban system effi-cient, SMART board members agreed.

BOARD MEMBERS supported seeking the merger Tuesday in an unanimus vote.

Both systems will spend a combined \$185 million this year, SMART officials said. That Ifgure could be trimmed by as much as \$47 million by merging, they said. The merger could eliminate duplicate bus routes and trim office staff.

"There's absolutely no reason there shouldn't be one system," Wir-gau said.

SMART is also considering overhauling its dial-a-ride service and seeking money from merchants and business organizations to pay for other specialized routes.

SMART also wants to consolidate 300 smaller local bus programs into the new city-and-suburban transpor-tation authority.

Tour: 19. (-1. 21. :.

BETWEEN D-DOT and SMART, it is clear SMART could use the savings the most.

In addition to carrying a \$3 million debt from its previous budget. SMART is expected to run more than \$4 million in debt for 1991-92.

SMART is spected to run more than \$4 million in debt for 1991-92.

SMART is \$1.8 million over budget in labor settlements, insurance payments and worker compensation costs, officials said.

In addition, SMART now expects \$1.3 million, SMART now expects \$1.3 million, SMART now expects \$1.3 million (SMART now expects \$1.3 million (SMART) now expect in a labor settlements, insurance Despite the reduced gas and some insurance. Despite the reduced gas and some insurance can some insurance ca

Suburbs say they need convincing

SMART issued the call, but local communities aren't rushing to an-

communities aren't runhing to answer.

"The regional transportation achievity seeks more money from local communities to keep its buses rolling.

"Plagued by an estilizated \$7.7 million debt this year — and with projections showing a combined \$19.3 million debt to wer the next three years — SMART seeks to merge with the Detroit Department of Transportation.

"Transportation."

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Without the merger, SMART could close as soon as this spring.
But the merger could depend on whether local communities will pay more for mass transit.
"Suburban communities have had a free ride — at least in terms of supporting transportation from their local budgets," SMART vice chairman Matt Wirgau said.

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grants are shrinking.

Whether local communities will agree to new taxes or general fund contributions is far from certain.

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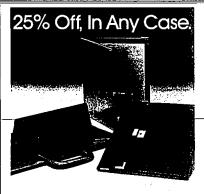
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