

Oakland board to SEMTA: How did you make train, bus cuts?

By Kathy Parrish
staff writer

Alarmed by plans to reduce bus and train service, Oakland County officials want to know how the cuts were made.

And some would even like to run their own transit system rather than rely on the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA). Oakland County's Board of Commissioners has sent a list of questions to SEMTA. By Sept. 29, commissioners want details on service to be eliminated Oct. 17.

"It's clear to me this is the kind of information we need to see why the cuts were made and work with SEMTA to help develop priorities," said Vice Chairwoman Lillian Moffitt, R-Bloomfield Township. "We know Oakland County better than they do."

FACING A \$16 million deficit, SEMTA's board last week voted to do

away with the Pontiac-to-Detroit commuter train, cut buses and routes and raise the youth fare. But it postponed the changes for two weeks to try to save some of the services.

Before then, Oakland officials want answers on why certain routes were cut. The commissioners voted unanimously Thursday to request an operating and cost analysis from SEMTA on the proposed transportation changes.

The list includes the number of passengers carried, miles of travel and operating cost.

Moffitt, who drew up the request, attended both the public hearing and SEMTA board meeting on the proposed cutbacks.

DURING THE Sept. 20 SEMTA board meeting, she lambasted SEMTA directors for holding "efficiency meetings, limiting speakers to three minutes and cross examining them."

Asking for a 30-day delay on the

cuts, Moffitt suggested SEMTA work with cities with train stops to see if they can share cost of such services as snow removal.

"There is fat in that commuter budget and other budgets. I think it's time this board took a very close look at those budgets to see where it could cut the fat," added the commissioner. "I think it's time we looked at real cost effective management."

COMMISSIONER James E. Lanni, R-Royal Oak, asked his fellow board members to establish an Oakland County Transit Authority within SEMTA's seven-county region.

The resolution, which was referred to the planning and building committee, would let the county apply for state and federal capital and operating revenues.

It also asks to keep Oakland County capital assets and revenues from being converted to cover operating deficits,

engineering or construction costs for the entire SEMTA region.

To help with its deficit, SEMTA is converting \$6.4 million federal capital dollars to \$6.2 million operating dollars.

Lanni said he objects to suburbanites paying gasoline transit taxes to support Detroit public transportation.

"They've got Magnum Oil deals, and the people of Oakland County are not even going to have a senior citizen Dial-a-Ride," said Lanni.

"RIDICULOUS," said Commissioner Alexander Perinoff, D-Southfield, of Lanni's resolution. "We never can operate any transit system and can never build a transit system within SEMTA."

Commissioner Dennis Aaron, D-Oak Park Democrat, said Oakland County asked for the cost analysis "two years too late."

Road work bids taken by state

Low bids on two Oakland County road projects were reported by the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

They were among 30 statewide projects, most of them for resurfacing deteriorating pavement surfaces.

Ten will be financed with funds from Gov. James Blanchard's highway bonding program to create jobs and maintain Michigan's road and highway network.

All low bids must be approved by the State Transportation Commission and the State Administrative Board before contracts are awarded.

Oakland projects slated for work are:

- In Pontiac, resurfacing a total of 1.6 miles on US-10 business route from north of Montclair south to Wide Track Drive and on Cass Avenue from the intersection with US-10 BR, then southwest to where the existing asphalt surface ends. Low bidder at \$127,340 on the June 1984 project was Thompson-McCully Co., Belleville.

- Traffic signal upgrading on one-half mile on Orchard Lake at 12 Mile roads, then south to the Oakland Community College entrance. Low bidder at \$67,401 on the November project was Harlan Electric Co., Southfield.

new strategies for designing and planning nature, hiking and bicycling trails.

Independence Oaks, an 830-acre park near Clarkston, is designed for environmental education. It offers a variety of trails, including a new, hard-surface All Visitors Trail.

Parks pros to study trails at Oakland park

Independence Oaks County Park will be host Wednesday as the Michigan Recreation and Park Association conducts a one-day workshop on "Trails for the Future."

The workshop will provide parks professionals

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