



**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Beth Gibbons**

**Cell: 313.461.4523**

**[Bgibbons@smartbus.org](mailto:Bgibbons@smartbus.org)**

## **SMART service reductions start Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> as COVID-19 emergency continues**

- Effective Monday, March 23, 2020, SMART will reduce fixed route services.
- Hours of service will be similar to weekday routes.
- Frequency of service will be lower than typical weekday service.
- Many routes will be based on current Saturday or weekday schedules.
- Updates on SMART service can be found at [www.smartbus.org](http://www.smartbus.org).

In response to the daily changes in our life related to Coronavirus (COVID-19), SMART is instituting a service reduction plan beginning Monday, March 23, 2020. Like all transit agencies throughout the country, SMART ridership has dropped by 60 percent, due to people working from home and the closure of many businesses and public facilities. By instituting this first structured service reduction, SMART will be able to maintain the same hours of service and geographic route coverage while reducing the number of drivers out on the road.

“In these unprecedented times, SMART plays a critical role in both getting people who have to get where they need to go while also doing our part to limit the spread of the virus,” said Robert Cramer, Deputy General Manager, “The dedication of our drivers, mechanics and support staff in these difficult times has been nothing short of amazing.”

SMART plays a critical role in helping people get to essential jobs, medical treatments, or helping people pick up groceries and fill prescriptions – these trips cannot wait for the crisis to subside. By taking this step, SMART is able to continue to provide reliable service that meets these trip needs while reducing frequency to mirror reduced overall demand. This step also ensures that SMART can continue reliable service even as staff continue to follow government guidance to stay at home if they are feeling ill, are asked to self-quarantine for any period, or have to care for a loved one who might be affected or vulnerable to the virus.

The overall reduction in service is approximately 30 percent, and the reduced schedule is based on maintaining the hours of operations and routing of weekday service while reducing the frequency of bus trips to Saturday service levels. A Reduced Service Lookup Module is available at [smartbus.org](http://smartbus.org) for riders to check information about route and trip times which may have changed.

SMART continues our efforts to protect our drivers and riders. On Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, SMART instituted free fares on all services and rear boarding/deboarding policy as a way to limit the exposure for both drivers and riders. SMART also requests riders to distance themselves from other riders as best they can when they are on the bus.

Efforts continue to enhance cleaning and sanitizing of SMART buses and facilities to further protect all SMART staff from the spread of COVID-19. Just last night, we started electrostatic



micro-bacterial spray treatments in common areas of the terminals and all SMART buses. The electrostatic spray creates a coating that kills current and future germs for approximately 7 days. We will continue this treatment on a regular basis until further notice. This service is in addition to nightly bus cleaning and the 'bus cleaning teams' stationed in the field with extra crews to get another mid-day sanitization of the bus.

For information on SMART routes and the service reduction, visit [www.smartbus.org](http://www.smartbus.org) or call SMART Customer Service representatives at (866) 962-5515, Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

###

*Serving residents since 1967, SMART is southeast Michigan's only regional public transportation provider, offering convenient, reliable and safe transportation for Macomb, Oakland and Wayne Counties. SMART's Fixed Route and small bus services connect people to employment and educational institutions, medical appointments and shopping centers. For routes and fare information, visit [smartbus.org](http://smartbus.org).*

###