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For Immediate Release

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SMART Commitment to the Community

No one is more committed than SMART to building a reliable, efficient and interconnected regional transit system that opens access to mobility for people throughout southeast Michigan. But we're not there yet.

SMART continues to face a shortage of qualified drivers that has forced us to reduce service on some routes. That has had a very real impact on the people in our community who count on SMART to get where they need to go.

That's not acceptable, and we're working to fix the problem.

But, the solution is neither simple nor singular. As we lead the change that will make SMART a national mobility leader, it's imperative that we take a multi-faceted, strategic approach to overcome a decades-long and complex set of challenges plaguing our regional transit system.

Compensation is an important first step. While we offer a generous benefits package, we recognize that the pay SMART currently offers to recruit and retain talent is not competitive. We need to pay more, and those negotiations are underway.

However, to fully address the driver shortage, we are also prioritizing improvements in our work environment that will enhance the quality of life for our team members.

On the recruitment front, we've launched innovative strategies to break down barriers to employment and to attract and retain a diverse pool of drivers reflective of our community. This includes partnering with Michigan Works! on the *Drive a Bus with Us* career fair and targeted recruitment campaigns designed to reach deep into diverse communities that may not have previously considered a SMART job.

In November, the public entrusted us with the mandate and the resources to plan and partner on a comprehensive mobility solution that will help drive the southeast Michigan economy forward. In all we do, including the critical work to recruit and retain talent, we remain committed to delivering that solution.