

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Potential Fall 2017 Schedule and Service Modifications
FROM: Christy Wegener, Director of Planning and Operations
DATE: May 1, 2017

Action Requested

Approve the final recommended schedule- and service modifications for Fall 2017.

Background

At the April Board of Directors meeting, Staff presented a list of proposed schedule- and service modifications to the Wheels fixed-route service to be implemented in conjunction with the start of the fall school semester in mid-August, and received approval to publish the proposed changes for public review and comment.

The LAVTA Marketing section has conducted multi-channel outreach in order to solicit public comment, including on social media outlets such as Peach Jar, Facebook, NextDoor, and Twitter; printed materials for posting onboard Wheels buses, including bilingual car cards and take-one flyers; and postings on the LAVTA website at www.wheelsbus.com. Flyers were distributed to Dublin High School staff and posted on campus. Additionally, feedback was solicited from Dublin residents living near the High School.

Since publishing the proposed service modifications, 23 formal comments have been received to date, and a summary of these is displayed in Attachment 1. As with prior comments forwarded to the Board in last month, many suggestions relate to school tripper service, transfer and connectivity issues, and concerns about lost service coverage.

As previously indicated, the intent of the Fall 2017 service modifications is primarily to address pressing smaller, short-term issues in the wake of the major service change that was implemented last year. Many of the comments received are outside of the framework of what can be addressed with the fall changes; however, those comments will be retained for a systemwide service review planned for the winter 2017-18 timeframe. The following outlines the final recommended service modifications for Fall 2017, based on the original proposals and modified as applicable following the public comments received since. (Items that have not been modified from the original proposal are still recapped in order to provide a consistent overview of the final recommendation set as a whole.)

Transfer Connectivity

Customer feedback indicates that the schedules that were implemented in August are not working satisfactorily with regard to transfers. Areas of particular concern are:

- Not enough time to catch a bus after exiting BART, particularly during peak times when there are late-arriving BART Trains
- Lack of schedule coordination at the Transit Center
- Challenges with transfers between Wheels routes, especially on weekends when the service frequency is lower

Staff is developing revised schedules that could be implemented this coming fall, which will address the issues above to the extent that is possible without adding substantial resources or severely disrupting other aspects of the service. Specifically recommended are:

- Widening the bus layover window at BART and pushing out departures by two minutes
- Conform more, or all, schedules to a departure bank that is coordinated with train departures and arrivals for BART's Dublin/Pleasanton – Daly City line
- Improve schedule coordination at the Transit Center between the #10 trunk line and the local Livermore routes

This recommendation is unchanged from the April proposal.

Route- and Logistical Modifications

Route 14 Civic Center Loop Modification and Route Frequency Adjustment. Stemming from the COA study, this route became a Livermore – Pleasanton v.v. trunk line in the fall of 2016. The core portion operates between the Livermore Transit Center and the East Dublin/Pleasanton BART station, while loop extensions on either end continue toward Santa Rita Jail (as Route 1) and the Livermore Civic Center, respectively.

The Board of Directors recently approved an extension of Route 1 to the new East County Hall of Justice in Dublin, which will be implemented conjunctively with the August signup following the opening of the new facility mid-summer. This extension will require a dedicated bus, and the current linking (interlining) between Route 1 and Route 14 will no longer be necessary. The new setup, however, effectively dedicates a bus to Route 1 that had previously partially supported the cycle for Route 14, and at least a part of those resources (hours) need to be reduced from Route 14. In addition, the #14 has continued to have on-time performance issues with an OTP of about 60%, which any revised setup should address as well. Staff is recommending two simultaneous ways to accomplish these goals in a way that does not cause an unacceptable service degradation on the route:

- Reducing the alignment, or reducing potentially redundant sequencing of areas served
- Reducing or rearranging trips and frequencies

Alignment: Currently, the route arrives from Pleasanton into Livermore by going into the Transit Center, then serving a loop to the Civic Center area, and then returning back to the

Transit Center before beginning its trip back toward Pleasanton. In order to save trip (cycle) time and maintain coverage at the same time, Staff is recommending that Route 14 no longer has a local appendix that double-dips into the Transit Center but instead operates the Civic Center portion as part of its trunk trips to and from Pleasanton. With this, the before-and-after sequence of main areas served would be as follows:

>> BEFORE: Pleasanton – Livermore Transit Center – Livermore Civic Center – Livermore Transit Center – Pleasanton

>> AFTER: Pleasanton – Livermore Civic Center – Transit Center – Livermore Civic Center – Pleasanton

A map containing an inset of the Livermore portion of Route 14 as it would look like if this change were implemented is shown in the attachment.

Frequency: The current weekday service frequency of Route 14 is 30 minutes during the AM and PM commute hours of 6AM to 9AM and 3PM to 6PM, and 60 minutes at other times. With an alignment adjustment such as the one outlined above, and with the Route 1 bus no longer available to lend part of its cycle time to Route 14, the best average frequency on #14 could be accomplished by providing an alternating 30/45-minute frequency during the AM and PM commute hours, and an alternating 45/60-minute frequency at other times. (These correspond to preserving denominators of the 15-minute BART frequency). A draft schedule created by Staff to test this approach shows that the total number of daily roundtrips on the route would only decrease from 23 to 21 with this setup.

The annual reduction from this item alone would amount to 1,250 vehicle revenue hours. If the #14 change above is implemented in conjunction with the previously-approved modification of #1, the net increase compared to current service is estimated at approximately 700 revenue hours, which would be within the amount of 800 hours that was previously estimated with the Route 1 change approval.

Due to the approved extension of Route 1 only affecting the weekday schedule, frequency modifications to Route 14 are not proposed for weekend service at this point, which would continue to interline with Route 1 and operate unchanged on an all-day hourly frequency during Saturdays, Sundays, and select holidays. However, for consistency, the alignment modification is recommended to apply for all days of service.

This recommendation is unchanged from the April proposal.

Dublin High School PM Boarding Area. Supplemental (school tripper) service is provided to Dublin High School by way of Wheels routes 501 thru 504. Routes 501, 502, and 504 currently drop off passengers in front of the school in the morning on northbound Village Parkway; in the afternoon, these routes are reversed and pick up on the opposite side of the school, in the southbound direction of Village Parkway.

As residential developments have continued in east Dublin and the Wheels supplemental route ridership to/from Dublin High has increased, staff of LAVTA's Operations contractor have indicated that the PM loadings have begun to present problems with students crowding the narrow sidewalk on southbound Village Parkway and spilling out on the street as they gather to board. Consultations with the Operations staff have yielded a solution that would allow the buses to load on northbound Village Parkway (in front of the school) in the afternoon, without creating an undue increase in travel times, as follows:

Route 501: Instead of operating on the southern portion of Village Parkway and on Dublin Boulevard, the route would express to/from the school via I-580 and I-680, entering and exiting the school vicinity via Alcosta Boulevard. The route would operate the freeway express portion west of Hacienda Drive, and continue to operate on local streets east thereof. (This change is also recommended in order to reduce travel times from the easternmost residential areas of Dublin)

Route 502: In the PM, the route would start on northbound Village Parkway (in front of the school) and head northbound, making a left on Davona, left on Lucania, left on Brighton, and right on Village, then resume its current routing.

Route 504: In the PM, the route would start on northbound Village Parkway (in front of the school) and would head northbound, making a left on Davona, left on Lucania, left on Brighton, and right on Village, then resume its current routing.

Maps depicting the recommended 500s revisions are attached.

This recommendation is unchanged from the April proposal.

Suspension of supplemental Route 505. Wheels Route 505 is a school tripper connecting several east Dublin subdivisions with Fallon Middle School. It began service in August 2016, and was intended as a replacement for Route 2, which had been marked for discontinuation in the COA study. As #2 was ultimately preserved, and the #505 coverage areas and travel times are effectively identical to those of Route 2, however, the #505 is superfluous to #2.

Route 2 is expected to be re-evaluated in the near-term, and its status may change at that time. If #2 is eventually discontinued, #505 would still be needed for transportation to Fallon Middle School. However, at this particular time #505 is redundant, and it is recommended that this route be *suspended* until a longer-term recommendation is developed regarding #2.

In the absence of Route 505 as a standalone service, the Route 2 schedule will be adjusted, if necessary, to accommodate the main bell at Fallon Middle School.

This recommendation is only changed from the April proposal in that it would formally only suspend, as opposed to eliminate, Wheels Route 505 as currently aligned and approved.

Route 602 – PM logistical modification. Route 602 is a supplemental service connecting three primary neighborhoods – Valley Trails, Parkside, and Del Prado Park - with Foothill High School. In the morning, one bus serves all three subdivisions, while in the afternoon two buses operate as follows:

- Bus #1: Valley Trails + Del Prado Park
- Bus #2: Parkside + Del Prado Park

After completing its route, one of the two PM buses converts (interlines) into Route 601 upon reaching Pleasanton Middle School, and continues toward Ruby Hill. Due to the sequencing of bell times at Foothill and Pleasanton Middle, the wait time for Pleasanton Middle students is about 10-15 minutes longer than the typical bell timing for the Wheels supplemental routes.

Following a parent complaint in regard to the student wait times at Pleasanton Middle, Staff studied the current ridership loads and patterns in order to try and determine whether a solution could be found that would not have an adverse impact on travel times for the high school students, while at the same time maintaining balanced loads on the two PM buses in order to avoid an overflow problem. Although neighborhoods tend to be cyclical in terms of their student population, Route 602 currently has little-to-no boarding or alighting activity on its Parkside Drive loop, so Staff originally proposed for the Parkside loop to be discontinued.

However, several public comments were received expressing concern about a Parkside discontinuation, pointing out that the middle school service through Parkside (#609) wasn't proposed for discontinuation and that the middle school students could be expected to migrate to the #602 in the upcoming academic year(s).

With this in mind, Staff's final recommendation is to continue direct service to all three of the neighborhoods that Route 602 serves, including Parkside Drive, but with a revised setup that can bring the interlined bus to Pleasanton Middle School a little earlier than current.

The AM service would continue to be operated by a single bus, serving Del Prado Park, Parkside, and Valley Trails. The PM service would continue to be operated by two buses but with the following subdivision split:

- Bus #1: Valley Trails + Parkside
- Bus #2: Del Prado Park

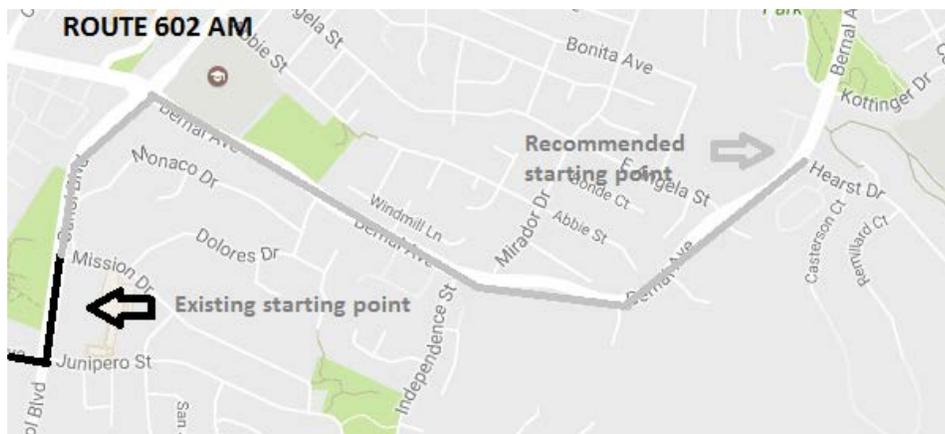
This way, the interlined bus would serve only one subdivision (Del Prado), and the bus that returns to the Garage after service would serve a lengthier two-subdivision loop. It is anticipated that this would enable the bus that is interlined to #601 to be scheduled to arrive for its pickup at Pleasanton Middle School 5-7 minutes earlier than currently.

This recommendation is changed from the April proposal in that service to Parkside Drive would be maintained.

Route 602 AM extension to Bernal/Hearst. For high school students, most of the Vintage Hills area is districted for Amador Valley High School, and is served by Wheels Route 611. However, students residing in the areas south of Bernal Avenue and Hearst Drive attend Foothill High School.

The current service in the vicinity for Foothill is Route 602. In the afternoon, students can travel from Foothill to Bernal Avenue by staying on the #602 bus that interlines into #601 (see the previous item for details); however in morning, the reverse is not possible due to the sequencing of bell times at Pleasanton Middle and Foothill High School, respectively.

Parts of the comments received during the month of April included requests for service to enable travel between the south Bernal Avenue area and Foothill High School in the AM. Given the fact that this area is districted to Foothill, and given the relatively simple logistics and low cost of adding to existing service, Staff recommends that the AM #602 be extended from its current starting point at Sunol/Mission to instead begin at Bernal/Hearst, adding five minutes of service time at the beginning of the route. The map insert below illustrates the recommended extension.



This recommendation is new from the original proposals.

The following table summarizes the recommended schedule and service modifications for Fall 2017.

Fall 2017 Recommended Service Adjustments	
Route	Measure
Multiple	Multiple schedule revisions to improve transfer connectivity at hubs
1	Extend service to new East County Courthouse **previously approved**
14	Change the sequencing of service areas in downtown Livermore
14	Adjust weekday frequencies from 30/60 peak/base to 30-45/45-60 peak/base
501	Operate as freeway express west of Hacienda Drive
502	Adjust circulation pattern around Dublin High School
504	Adjust circulation pattern around Dublin High School
505	Suspend route as standalone service
602	Logistical revision to PM service to enable earlier 601 departure from PMS
602	Extend AM service to begin at Bernal/Hearst

Budget

The COA changes were about 4,100 annualized revenue hours under the budgeted amount of approximately 125,800 hours in order to maintain a contingency of hours that could be applied later on toward fixing issues that might be expected to arise from such a major change in service and schedules. Of the 4,100 hours, about 1,500 have been used prior to this point to address ongoing issues (such as adding resources to Route 10 to improve OTP), and the proposed changes above to Routes 1 and 14 would add approximately 600 hours to this amount. With that, the fixed-route service would continue to operate slightly below budget after Fall 2017, at about 123,800 hours on an annualized basis.

Next Steps

This would be the final approval step. The target implementation date for the revisions is August 12, 2017.

Recommendation

Staff asks that the Board of Directors approve the recommended schedule- and service modifications for Fall 2017, as outlined above.

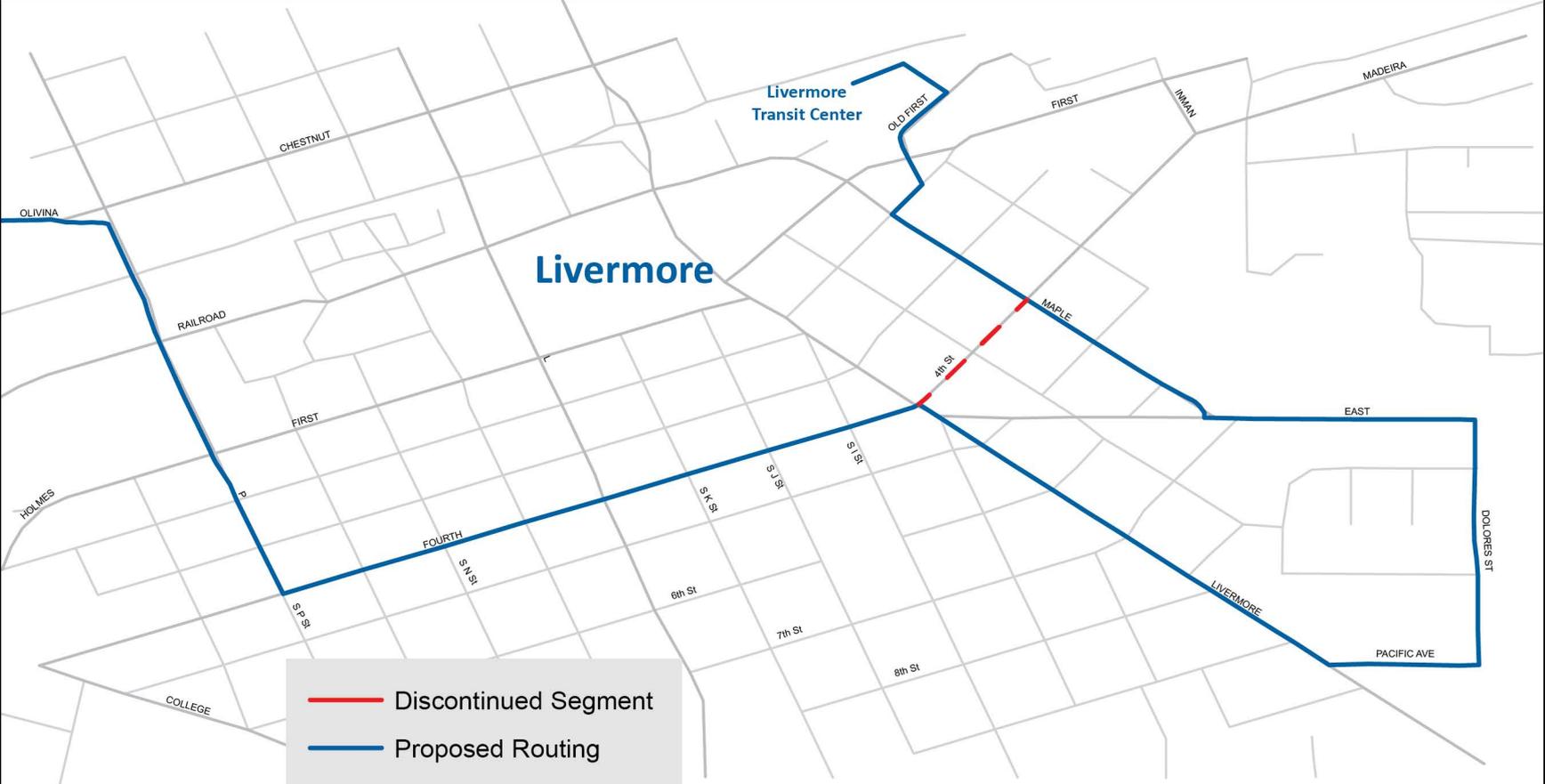
Attachments:

1. Summary of public comments since 03/22
2. Maps of recommended alignment modifications for Wheels routes 14, 501, 502, 504

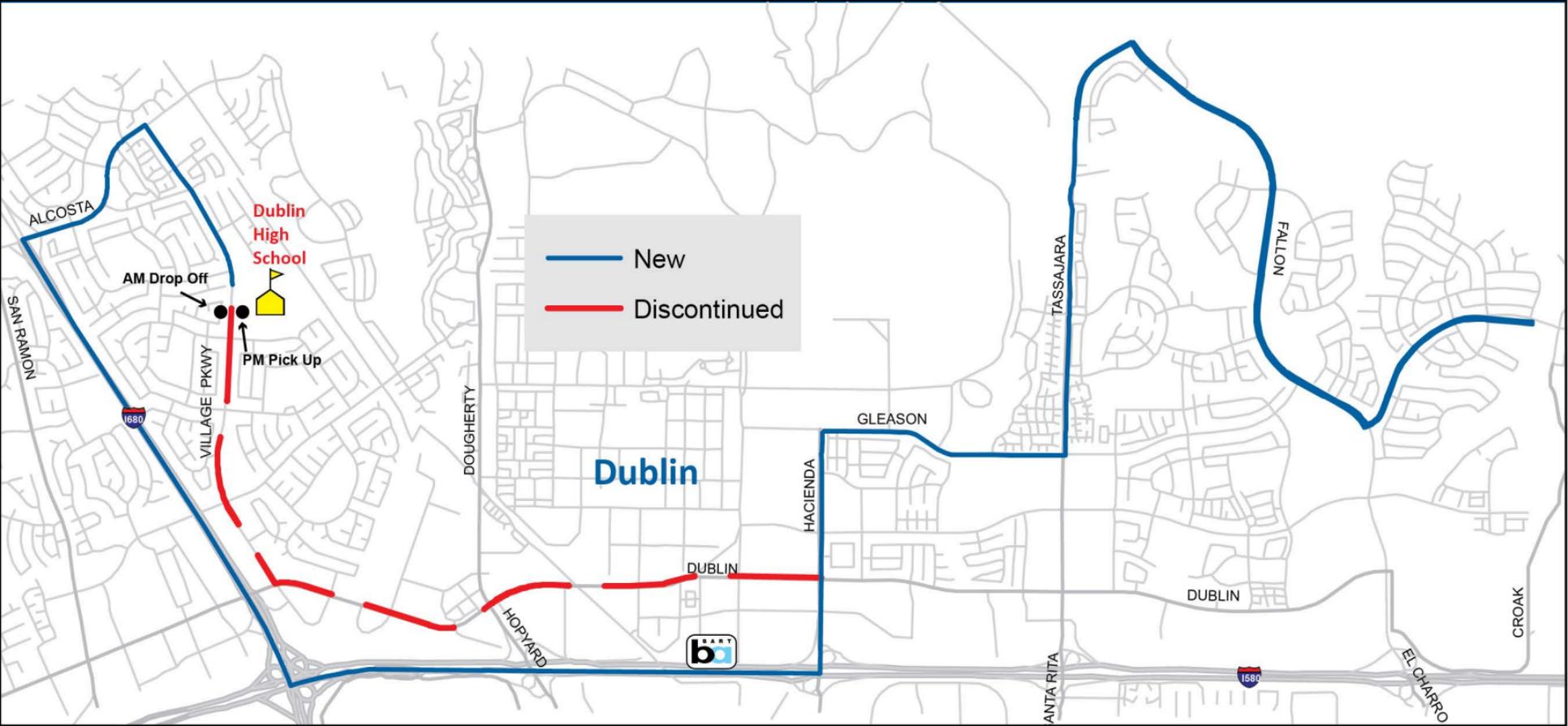
Approved: _____

PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED 03/22 TO DATE - FALL 2017 SIGNUP	
Date	Comment
4/5/2017	Would like Route 1 service restored to Central Parkway
4/5/2017	Would like to have service from Concord/Bordeaux to Foothill High School
4/5/2017	Would like Route 602 service to Parkside to be continued
4/6/2017	Would like Route 602 service to Parkside to be continued
4/6/2017	Supports changes to better align Route 8 schedule to the Bart schedule
4/6/2017	Would like Route 501 to arrive at Dublin High closer to the morning bell time
4/6/2017	Would like Route 580 to serve Livemore/Cromwell bus stop
4/7/2017	Would like to have service from Laguna Creek / Fawn Hills (south of Bernal) to Foothill High
4/11/2017	Would like to have service from Bernal/Angela to Foothill High School
4/11/2017	Would like direct service to Livermore Library restored
4/11/2017	Would like Route 601 to depart Pleasanton Middle closer to the afternoon bell time
4/12/2017	Would like to see Route 3 service restored between Stagecoach and Bart, at least during commute hours
4/14/2017	Would like to see service between Jordan Ranch (Central/ Sunset) and Dublin High
4/15/2017	Would like service restored to west Dublin areas such as Amador Valley Boulevard and San Ramon Road
4/15/2017	Would like a direct interface between Wheels and AC Transit; suggests service to Castro Valley
4/17/2017	Would like an additional northbound Route 70 trip departing Dublin/Pleasanton Bart at 8AM
4/18/2017	Would like Route 602 service to Parkside to be continued
4/18/2017	Supports Route 501 being more of an express bus to the school
4/19/2017	Would like to see Wheels trunk line service restored to the Stoneridge Mall area, and/or a restored connection between Stoneridge and the downtown Dublin area
4/20/2017	Would like increased frequency for Route 14 on weekends for service to the Outlets
4/21/2017	Would like the 15-min frequency on Route 30 to be extended to 8PM
4/25/2017	Would like more/restored fixed-route service to residential areas of east and west Dublin
4/26/2017	Supports continuation of Route 70, and would like its service hours extended

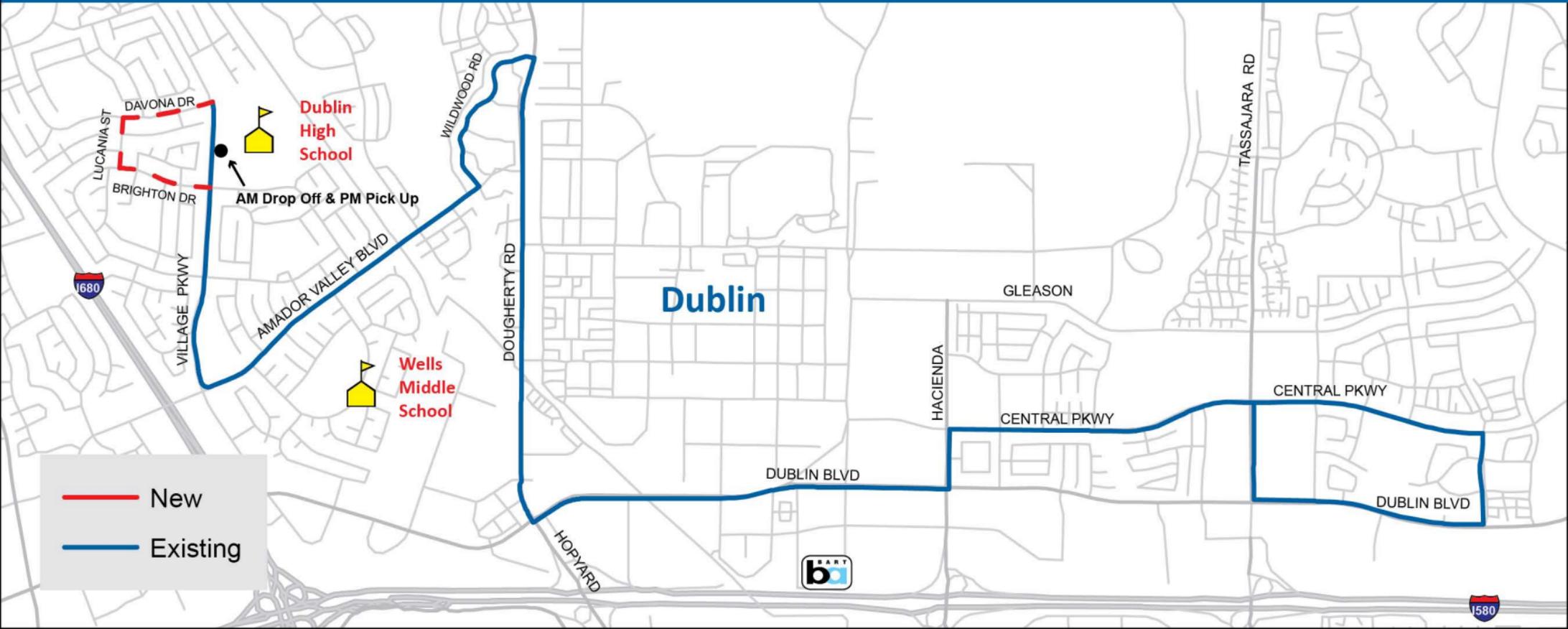
Route 14 Modification



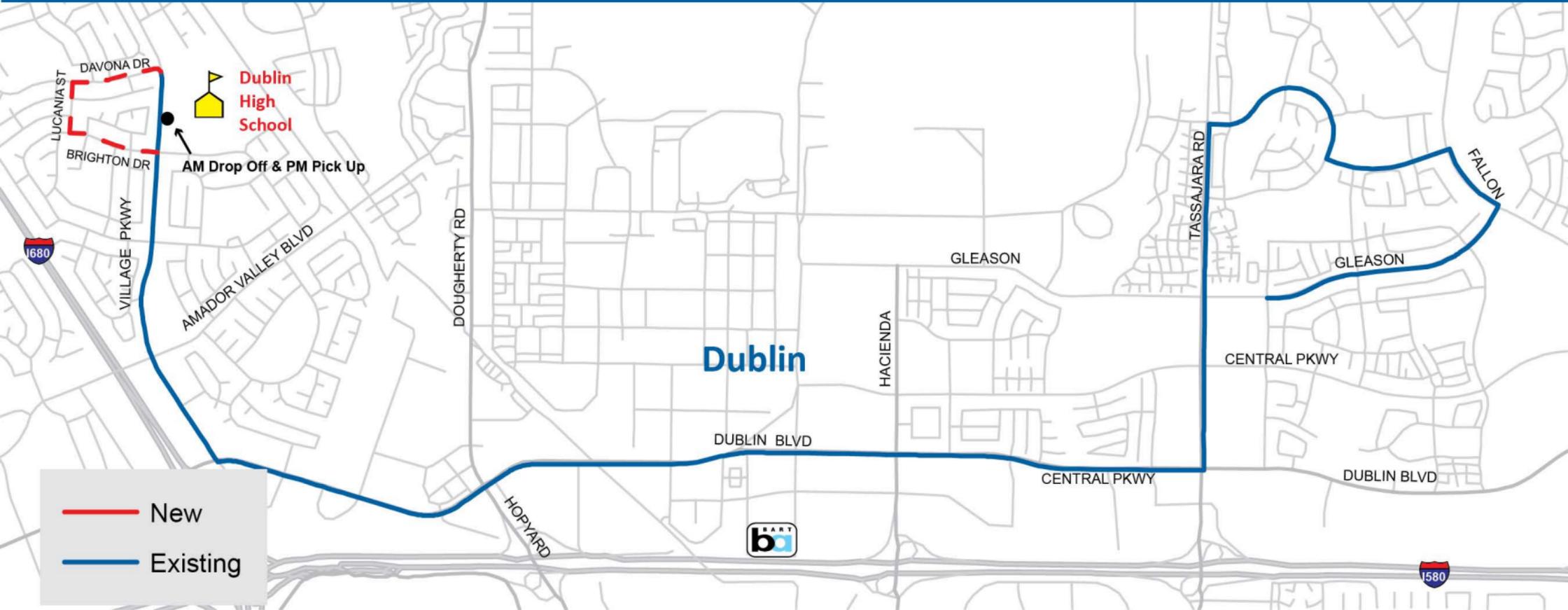
Route 501 Modification



Route 502 Modification



Route 504 Modification



- New
- Existing