

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Dublin Student Transit Service Study – Update

FROM: Michael Tree, Executive Director
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DATE: April 23, 2018

Action Requested

This is an informational item.

Background

At its February meeting, the Projects & Services Committee received an update about the current small-scale LAVTA study – conducted by Nelson\Nygaard & Associates – on the existing and near-future provision of Wheels fixed-route services in Dublin as it relates to middle- and high school student transportation.

As a supplement to its Wheels mainline service in Dublin, LAVTA currently provides four school-focused Wheels routes geared toward students attending area middle- and high schools. As residential developments in eastern Dublin continue to be completed at a fast pace, demand and ridership on the Wheels supplemental (school-focused) routes have continued to increase, and LAVTA has gradually deployed additional capacity in order to address this – mostly in the form of overflow buses operating on the same schedule as the principal buses.

In order to be able to continue to do capacity planning proactively, Staff asked the Consultant to conduct outreach and to gather information on the distribution and projected growth in school enrollment, and to develop a service plan that could be implemented in a first phase this coming fall 2018, and in a second phase beyond that time.

The data collection and outreach components of the study have been completed; a stakeholder meeting with staff from the City and the School District was held on 02/21, and a public open house was held on 03/08 - both at Dublin High School. An online survey was conducted shortly after that, and closed at the end of March after receiving 628 responses.

Discussion

The Consultant will be presenting the complete study findings and recommendations at the Board of Directors meeting on May 7, 2018. The following represents a summary of the existing service and a preview of the conceptual service plan at this time.

Existing service. The following table summarizes the existing supplemental Wheels routes in Dublin. All serve Dublin High School; Route 503 also serves Wells Middle School. Beyond these, the schedule and routing of Wheels *Route 2* are designed with Fallon Middle School students in mind.

WHEELS SUPPLEMENTAL ROUTES IN DUBLIN		
Route	Neighborhood(s) served	Number of buses (am/pm)
501	Positano Hill, Signal Hill, Silvera Ranch, Wallis Ranch, Emerald Glen	3* / 3**
502	Bray Park, Emerald Glen, Wildwood Road	1 / 2
503	Shannon Park	1 / 1
504	Dublin Ranch	1 / 2
Sweeper	Dynamic route	1 / 0

As noted in the table, a sweeper bus is currently deployed in the AM, acting as capacity support between boarding hotspots in eastern Dublin and the high school. In addition, Route 501 has an “early-bird” trip scheduled in the AM, and a “late-bird” trip scheduled in the PM – trips which effectively contribute only marginally to capacity due to their 20-30 minute offset from bell-timed departures.

The required number of buses to operate the supplemental services above amounts to 7 in the morning, and 8 in the afternoon, not including the early-bird / late-bird trips on the #501 which do not add to the peak vehicle requirement total due to their timing.

Preliminary recommendations being developed for Fall 2018 (near-term). The priority for the shortest-term recommendations has been to develop a plan that can be deployed as early as with school-starts in August of this year. As such, the focus is primarily on logistics: to advance-plan for sufficient coverage and capacity relative to the anticipated student enrollment in the fall. The following modifications are planned for recommendation:

- Adding capacity on Route 501, AM and PM
- Extension of Route 502 to the Jordan Ranch area
- Adding capacity on Route 504 in the PM
- Incorporating the current AM sweeper bus into the fixed alignment of Route 501

The following table summarizes these items and illustrates the associated changes in bus vehicle requirements, if any:

FALL 2018 CONCEPTUAL SERVICE PLAN		
Route	Description of change	Change in # of buses (am/pm)
501	Deploy one (1) additional overflow bus in the AM and PM, respectively	+1 / +1
502	Extend route to Jordan Ranch	0 / 0
503	No change	0 / 0
504	Deploy one (1) additional overflow bus in the PM	0 / +1
Sweeper	Incorporate with the #501 static route	-1 / 0

The net effect on vehicle requirements from the above plan would be neutral for the AM pull, but would add two buses to the PM pull.

Conceptual plan beyond Fall 2018 (medium-term). Although also a relatively short-range component, this would be a second phase of modifications that is anticipated to be necessary in the next 1-3 years, as more residential developments are completed and student enrollment continues to expand. For this timeframe, the following modifications are planned for recommendation:

- Extending Route 501 to the new subdivision off Palisades Drive in northeastern Dublin
- Adding capacity on Route 502, AM and PM, as the Jordan Ranch / Cottonwood Creek development reaches build-out
- New standalone supplemental route for Fallon Middle School

The following table summarizes these items and illustrates the associated changes in bus vehicle requirements, if any:

MEDIUM-TERM CONCEPTUAL SERVICE PLAN		
Route	Description of change	Change in # of buses (am/pm)
501	Extend route to new Palisades subdivision	0 / 0
502	Deploy one (1) additional overflow bus in the AM and PM, respectively	+1 / +1
NEW	Create new standalone supplemental route for Fallon Middle School	+1 / +1

In addition, the final recommendations are expected to include supporting services or programs (existing or potential) that could be implemented by the City or the District and that may help extend the effective radius of existing or proposed transit routes - such as improved walking paths and shared bicycle facilities/parking.

Budget

The main resources needed to implement the plan relate to peak vehicle and manpower requirements. Staff will be reviewing scheduling and other logistical savings to offset the small increase in vehicle hours required to support the first phase of the plan. For the medium-term plan, however, other types of offsets or service trade-offs may be required.

Next Steps

The Consultant will present the study findings and recommendations at the May meeting of the Board of Directors. Following this, Staff will return to the Board at the June meeting for final recommendations and approval.

Recommendation

None – information only.