

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Six-Month Ridership Trend Following the Wheels-in-Motion Service Changes

FROM: Michael Tobin, Director of Operations  
Cyrus Sheik, Senior Transit Planner

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**Action Requested**

This is an informational item.

**Background**

The Wheels-in-Motion (WiM) service changes, implemented on March 23, 2024, were developed in response to community feedback gathered through a robust outreach effort, and were triggered due to a change in the BART Blue Line train frequency. The WiM adjustments aligned Wheels service frequencies with the post-pandemic BART schedule, ensuring better connectivity, and expanded service coverage to reach more areas within the community. Importantly, the changes were designed to be cost-neutral, maintaining the current budget while improving service.

**The Wheels-in-Motion Service Changes**

To recap, the main elements of the WiM service changes were:

Frequency adjustments. All Wheels routes were aligned to match the new 20-minute frequency on BART's Blue Line. For the Rapid lines (10R and 30R), this meant a slight reduction in service frequency from 15 minutes to 20 minutes all day. Some of the existing local neighborhood routes such as the 1, 3, and 8 were similarly adjusted from 30 minutes to 40 minutes during peak, and remained hourly during midday and evenings.

Service restorations. Service was reintroduced on routes that had been suspended during the pandemic (2, 11, 580X), as well as to restore service to areas of the community that had seen service discontinued in years prior (2, 4, 18). These routes operate on 40-60-minute frequencies during extended commute hours.

Weekend service. Saturday service was improved by increasing the frequencies on both the 10R and 30R (to 20 and 40 minutes, respectively), and by providing (Saturday) service on the new Route 4, while Sunday service levels stayed approximately the same.

### Six-Month Trend After the WiM Implementation

This analysis evaluates ridership performance six months after the implementation of the Wheels-in-Motion (WiM) service changes. Pre-existing routes are assessed year-on-year (YoY) by comparing October 2024 metrics—total ridership, average weekday boardings, and boardings per service hour—with October 2023 data. Analyzing these three metrics helps gauge both overall ridership demand and route productivity.

Newly introduced or restored routes are evaluated based on October 2024 ridership numbers and their growth trajectory since their first full month of operation in April 2024. Additionally, October 2019 ridership data is included to provide context on ridership recovery compared to pre-pandemic levels. A more comprehensive analysis will be possible once a full year of data is available for all routes.

Pre-existing routes. A key question following the WiM changes was whether slightly reducing the frequency of the trunk lines 10R and 30R—from every 15 minutes to every 20 minutes—would impact ridership. The assumption was that riders would adapt to the new schedule, as it better aligned with post-pandemic BART frequencies.

The YoY numbers (October 2024 vs. October 2023) indicate that ridership was indeed not lost because of this adjustment, but rather continued their upward post-pandemic trend: the 10R boardings were up by ~11%, and the 30R boardings were up by ~16% during this time.

The other routes that received frequency adjustments (mostly from 30 minutes to 40 minutes, and unchanged hourly service midday) show more of a mixed picture; on average, they were up ~4% YoY. These include routes 1, 3, 8, and 14; route 15 received a 20-minute peak frequency. The table below shows the individual route trends.

As for boardings per service hour, all of the existing routes that received frequency adjustments, save for Route 3 and Route 15, show a YoY gain in productivity, with the three intermunicipal routes (10R, 30R and 14) seeing an average 29% increase in boardings per service hour alone.

Table 1 – YoY monthly ridership for existing routes that received frequency adjustments.

TREND – Year-on-Year Monthly Ridership					
Route		Boardings Oct '19	Boardings Oct '23	Boardings Oct '24	YoY Change
1	Central Dublin	2,880	2,204	2,192	-1%
3	Stoneridge	3,947	1,864	1,541	-17%
8	Hopyard	5,350	3,581	4,099	14%
10R	Intermunicipal	42,215	25,835	28,688	11%
14	Intermunicipal	10,838	7,837	9,275	18%
15	Springtown	12,555	10,120	10,523	4%
30R	Intermunicipal	56,715	34,809	40,491	16%

Table 2- Average Weekday Boardings for existing routes that received frequency adjustments.

Average Weekday Boardings (AWB)				
Route		Oct '23	Oct '24	Change
1	Central Dublin	80	91	14%
3	Stoneridge	68	55	-19%
8	Hopyard	135	153	13%
10R	Intermunicipal	978	1,067	9%
14	Intermunicipal	281	311	11%
15	Springtown	407	403	-1%
30R	Intermunicipal	1,417	1,602	13%

Table 3 - Weekdays BVSH for existing routes that received frequency adjustments.

PRODUCTIVITY – Boardings per Service Hour (BVSH)				
Route		Oct '23	Oct '24	Change
1	Central Dublin	8.1	10.5	30%
3	Stoneridge	3.9	3.1	-21%
8	Hopyard	5.0	6.7	34%
10R	Intermunicipal	10.7	13.4	25%
14	Intermunicipal	9.0	10.7	19%
15	Springtown	13.2	12.7	-4%
30R	Intermunicipal	10.8	15.5	44%

Chart 1- Average Weekday Boardings for the past 24 months

New / restored routes. This group, which comprises routes 2, 4, 11, 18, and 580X, has not yet operated for a full year. Thus, the barometer reading used at this point is simply how they are faring today (October 2024) in terms of absolute numbers, and how that compares with their first full month of operation (April 2024).

Based on these numbers, shown in the following table, most so far meet Staff’s expectations at this early stage – especially given their primary role to provide coverage in previously underserved areas, as well as acting as feeders to the main trunk lines. The one route that is below expectations here is the 11, which still only averaged about ten boardings per day as of October. And although not apparent from the total number, ridership on the non-bell-time trips of route 2 remains low as well.

Table 4 - Year-on-Year monthly ridership for new/restored routes

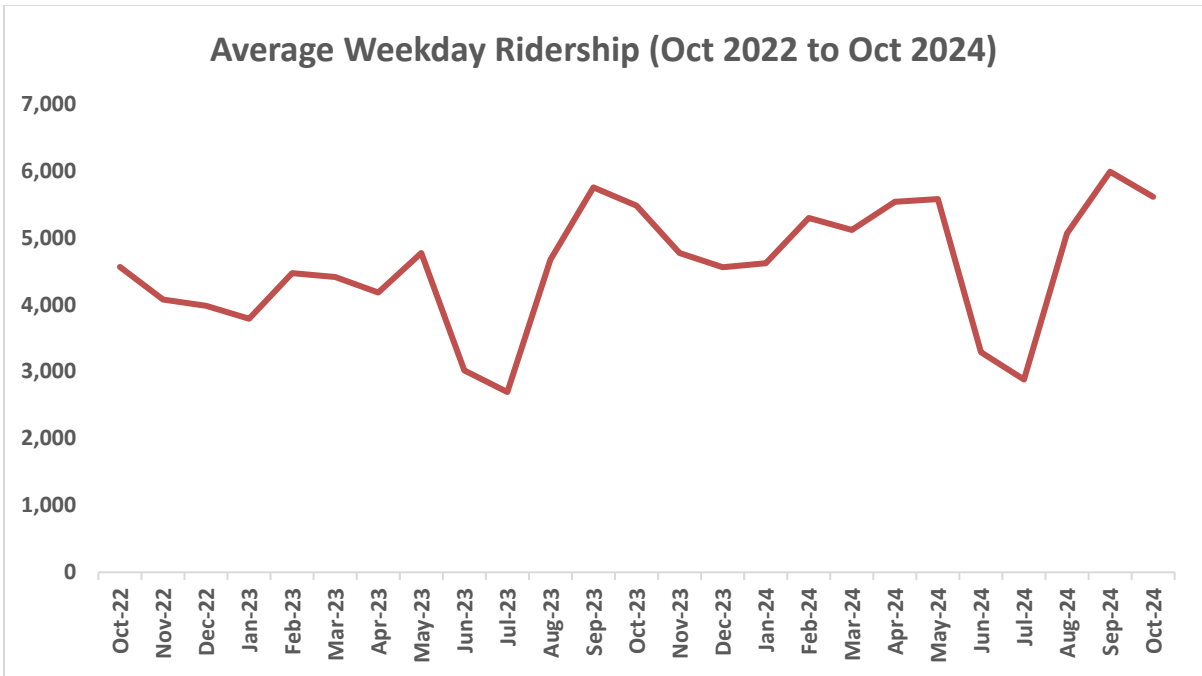
TREND - NEW / RESTORED ROUTES				
Route		Boardings		Change
		Apr '24	Oct '24	
2	East Dublin	849	1,315	55%
4	West Dublin	759	1,355	79%
11	Greenville Rd	118	199	69%
18	Granada	335	617	84%
580X	Express	281	405	44%

Table 5 - Weekdays BVSH for new/restored routes.

BOARDINGS PER SERVICE HOUR ON NEW / RESTORED ROUTES					
Route		Oct '19	Apr '24	Oct '24	YoY
					Change
2	East Dublin	12.7	8.1	11.0	36%
4	West Dublin	-	2.2	4.2	91%
11	Greenville Rd	7.9	1.6	2.7	69%
18	Granada	-	2.3	4.3	87%
580X	Express	8.7	2.2	3.0	36%

Systemwide. The total number of boarding across all Wheels mainline (excluding the supplemental school routes) in October 2024 was 104,701. This represents an increase of 14.5% over the same month of last year.

The chart below illustrates the trend in average weekday boardings over the past 24 months, highlighting a consistent upward trajectory in ridership as the region continues to recover from the impacts of the pandemic. This sustained growth reflects both the effectiveness of the service adjustments introduced through the Wheels-in-Motion initiative and the broader recovery in transit demand as commuting patterns stabilize.



**Next Steps**

Six months is still a very early timeframe to draw conclusions from, but as indicated above, the results so far show a sustained uptrend across almost all Wheels routes through and after the WiM implementation.

Recent marketing campaigns, such as Alameda County’s Student Transit Pass Program (STPP) promotions, have offered significant support for new or restored routes such as routes 201 and 18. Others, like the 4 (which has already had a good ridership response) and the 11 (which has not) will be targets of the 2025 marketing and outreach campaigns, targeting residents as well as major employment sites.

Rider acquisition advertising campaigns will target audiences where need and opportunity are greatest. This includes the proliferation of multigenerational households with seniors and students, partnerships with Las Positas College, and continued outreach at senior centers.

Specifically, Customer Experience will oversee a combined advertising and canvassing effort in commercial and industrial areas (Hacienda Business Park and Livermore Industrial Area) to promote business participation in the Commuter Benefits Program which is a required subsidy for Bay Area companies with over 50 employees.

**Recommendation**

This is an informational item.