

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Scheduled Bus Arrival Times at Dublin High School – Follow-Up Item

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

DATE: October 27, 2025

Action Requested

This is an informational item.

Background

At the August Projects & Services Committee meeting, Committee members inquired as to the reason that the Wheels supplemental 500-series routes arrive relatively early at Dublin High School (DHS) when compared to the school's bell time.

Following up on this item at the September meeting, Staff outlined the reasons that the buses are scheduled this way, specifically that this is being done so that those buses (and operators) can perform two school routes during their morning runs to maximize the agency's limited resources.

Responding to this, Director Josey requested that Staff investigate the possibility of scheduling the arrivals closer to the bell time, including the possibility of adding resources to help accommodate the later arrival time at DHS.

Discussion

Based on the above request, Staff held a discussion with the agency's contractor's management team regarding the feasibility of adding the resources that would be required to schedule the morning arrivals at DHS closer to the bell time. Based on that conversation, three options are outlined below for conversational purposes – each of which would require varying levels of dedicated resources:

Option 1: Make a smaller adjustment to the schedule, working within the existing resources allocated. Due to the early arrival of the routes at DHS, the buses encounter less traffic than the schedule is currently timed for, meaning that they arrive about 7-8 minutes ahead of their scheduled arrival of 7:50a.

Staff could work with Operations to "tighten" up the allotted running time for the last segment of the route and schedule the rest of the trip(s) for ~8 minutes later. While the

formal arrival time at the school would be the same as currently, this would effectively save ~8 minutes of travel time for students compared to the current schedule.

Under this option, the four buses that currently continue on to operate routes for Hart Middle School (HMS) could continue to do so, because there would still be sufficient time to reposition them to the downstream route(s), and therefore no additional resources would be required under this option.

Option 2: Push out the time of all the buses, such that they would be scheduled to arrive at the school at or around 8:10a. This would save students time between the bus arrivals and the bell time. At the same time, it would require four (4) additional buses (and drivers) to operate, because there is nothing else to piece together at that time of the morning.

In discussing this possibility with the Operations contractor, their staff anticipates that they *would* be able to cover the additional pulls with drivers, but cautioned that the addition of more, short split-work pieces could hurt driver retention, as this type of work incurs a combination of short pay time and long midday splits that is unattractive relative to comparable operator jobs offered on the market.

The direct additional cost of this option is estimated at \$8,500, assuming operation as of, and through, the spring semester – stemming from the extra deadhead time incurred. The indirect cost would be the potential for cumulatively higher turnover amongst Wheels bus operators, and its associated costs of recruiting, training, and graduating new drivers ongoing.

Option 3: Move Route 501 arrivals closer to the bell time but make only a small adjustment to the others. This would basically apply Option 2 to the #501, and Option 1 to the other routes.

The pros and cons of this option would be a hybrid of those for options 1 and 2 and require two additional buses.

Option	Modification	Spring 2026 Cost
1	7-8 minute adjustment (later) in start time of 501-504; same arrival time at DHS	\$0
2	Modify all 501-504 schedules so that they arrive 20 mins before the DHS bell.	\$8,500; 4 additional peak buses
3	Modify the 501 so that it arrives 20 minutes before the DHS bell	\$4,250; 2 additional peak buses

Recommendation

While this is not an action item, Staff will take the Committee’s input into consideration in its forward logistics planning for service to DHS and other area schools during the spring semester of 2026.