BusConnects Submission Malahide

Introduction

The proposed changes to services for Malahide would mean a reduction in bus services to be complemented by a purported increase in DART frequency. DART and commuter rail services are at capacity on the Northern line as it stands. Malahide therefore relies on an efficient, robust and frequent bus service to service the thousands of daily commuters. Malahide has a large commuter population and one that is relatively well served by direct bus services. Local, direct and express peak bus routes would be reduced. The BusConnects proposal promises to increase frequency and expand the area covered by the Dublin Bus network, through an interchange system. Interchange systems have trade-offs, peripheral towns like Malahide will see a reduction in bus services. Darragh O’Brien TD and Cllr Eoghan O’Brien strongly oppose these proposals and support the Malahide community’s efforts to maintain local, direct and peak services to Dublin City Centre.

Proposed Changes

1. The **102** and **32** routes will be combined to create the half-hourly **60** (Dublin Airport to City Centre via Coast).
	1. This route will not serve Yellow Walls Road, Seabury or Holywell.
	2. It will be the **only** bus route for Robswall, the Old Golf Links, Abbots Hill, Mayfair, the Moorings, Seapark, Muldowney, and Biscayne.
2. The **142** will be axed. Malahide will lose all peak services through the Port Tunnel.
	1. Route currently has 9 services a day.
		1. 5 buses into town between 07:10 and 07:55
		2. 4 buses towards Malahide between 16:35 to 17:35
3. The **42** will be replaced by the half-hourly **D1.**
	1. Route currently has 80 buses a day (42 in 38 out).
	2. Assuming one bus in both directions every 30 minutes (06:00 to 23:00 - current schedule) would be 68 buses. The D1 would prove a more limited service with fewer buses.
	3. The route will run from The Grand Hotel through Malahide Village, then down the Malahide Road.
4. Residents of Seabury, estates on the Swords Road will have to travel to McAllister’s garage or Swords to pick up services to the city centre.
5. The **42d** Portmarnock to DCU would be axed.
6. The **32x**,serving city centre and UCD, would be replaced by the like-for-like **381**
7. The new 20-25 minute **281** would serve Portmarnock Station – Swords.
	1. This would be the **only** bus connection for Seabury, St. Andrews, Church Road, Galtrim Grange, The Hill, St Sylvester, Oak Hall, Mount Field, and The Bawn.

Our Proposals

We recognise the need to update the current system but we would ask the NTA to consider the following proposals:

1. **Maintain the 142**, indeed an expansion should be considered, it is a very important route for Malahide commuters and students. In short we need more 142’s and it is incredible in the extreme to even contemplate its removal.
2. **The D1 should be a like-for-like replacement of the 42.** The 42 is an extremely popular service; it actually needs more buses on the current route to meet demand at peak time. The current route serving Malahide and Portmarnock should be maintained.
3. **Maintain the** **42d**. Students must be able to travel to university swiftly.
4. The **281** should be extended to Dublin Airport. The maintenance of an airport link for all Malahide residents is important for commuters and airport workers. This should be a 7 day per week service, with increased frequency.

Key Issues

1. Malahide has a high proportion of commuters, school-aged children, university students and elderly people who require a regular direct bus service.
	1. Interchange is a penalty for all these groups, who require travelling swiftly and without interruption.
	2. Interchange systems by their nature provide a comprehensive service at the expense of utility:
		1. The service will be slower due to interchanges.
		2. The service will be more cumbersome for elderly people, children, people with special needs, and parents with young children.
		3. Interchanges will cause delays for commuters and others who require reliability and punctuality from their bus service.
2. Services such as the 142 and 42 are immensely popular. At peak times some commuters cannot physically get on these buses. These services, rather than being cancelled, require increased capacity.
3. Hundreds have contacted Darragh O’Brien TD expressing their opposition to these proposals. Seabury residents, in particular, will be adversely affected by these proposals.
4. In the past few years Malahide managed to gain the 142 and increased regularity on the 42, to reverse this now would be met with hostility.
5. The Bus Connects proposal demonstrate a lack of concern for local conditions:
	1. Failure to route D1 from Seabury.
	2. New Educate Together Secondary School will bring up to a thousand new school pupils into the area.
	3. Duplication of Swords Express routes at the expense of existing commuter routes.
	4. Failure to maintain commuter services through Port Tunnel. No increase in frequency at interchanges can make up for travelling at 80km/h non-stop.
	5. The Current peak services to Portrane, Skerries and Malahide through the Port Tunnel are at times full to capacity. They need more supply, not less.

Specific Concerns for Malahide

The NTA proposals would be hugely detrimental to the Malahide community. Malahide needs regular direct bus services that reflect its diverse population and requirement for public transport links. Malahide is ever-growing; the proposed reductions in its services are short-sighted. The 2017 Constituency Commission Report noted that Fingal is the fastest growing in Ireland. Services such as the 142, 42, and 32 have issues of undersupply. The opening of a new Educate Together Secondary school has the potential to add a thousand new passengers to public transport in Malahide. Some commuters are already not physically able to board these services at peak times. This issue has also been raised by rail commuters. The proposed infrastructure of Core Bus Corridors, Metro Link and ten minute DART will not be completed in the short term and Malahide will be left without an adequate service. The express services that enable commuters to get out of their cars should be welcomed by the NTA, not scrapped.

There is a real issue with interchange for people with learning disabilities with regard to utility. A number of parents with adult dependents have contacted Darragh O’Brien TD with concerns. One mother explained that ceasing direct services to the city centre would drastically reduce the independence of her 30 year old daughter with Down syndrome. She is able to take direct services to the city with relative ease but would not be able to use an interchange service. She will never legally be allowed to drive and to remove direct services would be an intolerable injustice. This is just one instance of how the complexity of the system will most affect those, whose need is the greatest.

One of the key issues expressed in the report is that tourists find our bus network difficult to use. We of course recognise that it is important that tourists find Dublin find a hospitable place to visit. Recently, an operator of an English Language school expressed concern about the lack of capacity on the 42. Furthermore, they argued that requiring younger travellers to make interchanges may places strains on their ability to commute to and from the language school. It is important that the full range of issues be addressed, Malahide receives a large number of ESL students and it would be detrimental to the town’s economy to reduce public transport links.

Conclusion

The Malahide community relies on its bus services. Malahide’s peak commuter services need expansion not contraction. Malahide services should connect commuters to the city swiftly. It should allow residents of the Malahide area to shop in the village and Swords Pavilion. It should allow all Malahide residents to travel to Dublin Airport without changing buses. It should allow those with mobility issues to travel without having to change buses. Reducing direct and peak bus services from Dublin’s commuter belt will not force commuters onto trains -there is simply not the capacity or the infrastructure- if able, they will drive.

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