

Getting home faster, cheaper, greener.

The Green Party's vision for Wellington region will make life easier, giving you more choices and saving you money.

Our plan builds on Wellington's strengths. Many people already walk and cycle, and Wellington region's public transport use is the highest in New Zealand. Our region also has compact walkable city centres, and geography that makes urban sprawl less feasible. Our plan will get you home faster, more safely, with more choice and less cost.

We will:

- Make cycling and walking safer and easier.
- Lower fares and vastly improve rail and bus services.
- Improve road safety for everyone.

We'll also support smart planning, good urban design, and faster, cheaper broadband to help reduce your need to travel.

Our region will be an even better place to live with:

- Less time in traffic jams and more room on the roads for essential travel.
- More choice for people and businesses in the face of higher oil prices.
- Healthier lifestyles, cleaner air and reduced carbon emissions.

Background and issues

Better transport options for Kiwis is a Green Party priority. The Green Party negotiated the first-ever national fund to support walking and cycling. Here in Wellington, the Greens have already saved Wellington's iconic trolley buses, and helped secure funding for new passenger trains for the regions rail services. We even saved the Overlander train between Wellington and Auckland. But there is much more to do.

Our world is changing. Within twenty years, climate change will be affecting all of our lives dramatically, with severe weather events like droughts and

storms becoming more frequent. Oil production over the next two decades will peak, and then fall away below existing demand. We need to make smart choices now to prepare for this new world.

We've already got a good head start: Wellington has a solid, basic transport infrastructure which could easily be upgraded into a first class transport network. Downtown Wellington is compact which works to its advantage. Most of Wellington's employment, entertainment and leisure facilities – and a growing amount of residential accommodation – are packed into one of the smallest central areas of any city in the world. The Hutt and Porirua also have strong centres which form local hubs for their thriving communities.

Our region's geography and infrastructure mean it should be easy to get around. But if we keep pouring more cars into our narrow streets, we will only create more and more congestion. Our transport planning and funding system was designed for an age of dirt cheap oil, before climate change was even heard of. For every dollar the government currently spends on roads, only 20 cents is spent on public transport.

This has given us an ageing rail system, a dangerous environment for cycling, and congested roads. The current bias towards road spending is clearly unsustainable. Traffic is no longer growing the way it used to. Just a 5-10% reduction in peak traffic volume would significantly reduce congestion as we know it, freeing the roads for essential journeys and emergency services.

The Greens' plan will make getting around the region easier and cheaper, and give all of us more choice in how we do so.

Vision

Our vision is to make Wellington a world leader in sustainable urban living, a city well-equipped to deal with the realities of climate change and soaring oil prices. Our ideas for Wellington will help create a springboard for a dynamic, prosperous future as we face up to the growing global challenges.

What will it cost?

The Greens will progressively increase the proportion of funding spent on public transport, walking and cycling facilities. We will give priority to funding better public transport, walking and cycling ahead of new motorways.

In our first year in government, we will double the central funding for public transport, while keeping the current budget for maintaining and renewing existing roads. We'll also finish roading projects that are already underway.

Over the following five years, we'll increase the spending on public transport, rail, walking and cycling to two-thirds of total transport spending. With better

public transport, and new cycling and walking projects, our present roading infrastructure – well-maintained – will be all we need.

At present Government provides more support for new motorways and road maintenance than it does for new public transport and footpath maintenance. We'll shift responsibility for funding walking, cycling and public transport from councils to government, creating more choice without more rates.

Safer walking and cycling

Wellington City is already compact and walkable, and nearly 50% of all trips within the city are on foot. There is great potential to make the Hutt, Porirua and Kapiti more cycle and pedestrian friendly. The Green Party's vision is to make the region more liveable and people-friendly, by promoting safer walkways and a strong cycling culture.

Walking and cycling are clean and cheap, and help us all live healthier lifestyles. The Greens will:

- fund the Great Harbourway, a walking and cycling trail stretching right around the harbour.
- reduce urban speed limits, especially in areas of high pedestrian use, and where children walk to school.
- give pedestrians priority in dense inner-city streets, and design street connections to encourage walking.
- improve legal rights for cyclists and pedestrians. We'll introduce a model found in many European countries, whereby, as long as a cyclist or pedestrian is observing the road rules and common courtesy, in a collision with a vehicle, the motorist will be held responsible.

To further promote cycling, we will:

- complete our regional cycle network.
- give local councils financial incentives to promote a 'cycling culture' in urban centres, including more secure cycle parks.
- provide secure bicycle storage at train stations and make buses able to carry bikes, where practicable.
- provide cycle phases on lights at key intersections.

Lower fares

We'll invest in public transport while at the same time making it more affordable. We will:

- Introduce \$1 'anywhere for 2 hours' off-peak fares on all services. This will encourage people who can travel at off-peak hours to do so, helping to ease congestion during the busiest times of day.
- Create cheaper day, week and month passes for public transport, usable on all services, with a 50% discount for children, beneficiaries and students. For Wellington region these could be around \$5/day, \$25/week and \$75/month.
- Roll out genuine 'Smart cards' across *all* buses, trains and ferries, making your journey seamless and integrated.

Vastly improve bus and rail services

Seamless, rapid rail services

We have a good base from which to build a comprehensive electric rail system throughout the Wellington region. The Green Party's plan will create an affordable, effective and high quality rail system.

A modern light rail network

A light rail system that's compatible with the existing train lines is the most effective way to extend seamless rail travel through Wellington to significant destinations like the hospital, the airport, and the Eastern Suburbs. .

The Greens will roll out light rail in three measured stages:

- Stage I: Johnsonville to Courtney Place, \$70 million, completed 2011
- Stage II: Lower Hutt to Wellington Hospital, \$100 million, completed 2015
- Stage III: Plimmerton to Wellington Airport, \$250 million, completed 2016

This will help connect the region for less than half the cost of Transmission Gully. And it will run on clean, renewable electric power.

In simple terms, it could look something like this [overleaf]

Wellington Rail Strategy



Completing our existing rail network.

The Greens will continue to invest in rail infrastructure, extend rail lines, and make existing services more frequent. As well as the light rail plans above, we will extend the electric train service:

- in the Hutt, from Upper Hutt to Featherston and then on to Masterton.
- on the Kapiti Coast to Waikanae and then on to Otaki.

We'll also upgrade the lines to allow express services, so that train travel is noticeably faster than using a car for these journeys.

To further upgrade the infrastructure, we will:

- Improve rail stations in the Wellington region and provide safe, high quality access, including a new station at Raumati and McKay's crossing.
- Duplicate key parts of the rail track (eg from Pukerua Bay to Paekakariki and from McKays Crossing to Waikanae River) to enable faster, more frequent passenger services .
- Encourage the movement of freight by rail, by developing 'inland ports' at Masterton, Seaview and Otaki, and further afield, with electric rail to shuttle freight to Centreport.
- Investigate a direct rail connection from the North Island Main Trunk to the Hutt as a rail freight route.
- Replace existing signalling with state-of-the-art technology for greater safety and faster running.
- Revive plans for an iconic heritage tram loop to serve the waterfront, CBD and Gateway.

Better buses

Electric trolley buses are an efficient way to use clean, renewable energy to get around and the Green Party strongly supports them. The Green Party will use the funding system to also encourage low and zero-emission vehicles, such as high-efficiency, low-emission diesel engines, and we'll introduce emission and efficiency standards. We will also support and expand the existing trials of technologies such as bio-diesel and hybrid engines.

The Greens will:

- Properly fund the ongoing maintenance of the trolley buses overhead wires and power supply systems.
- Introduce trolley buses on more busy bus routes.
- Expand bus services with more suburb-to-suburb services, and a 'round-the-bays' bus in summer.
- Use bus priority at lights to help speed journeys.
- Integrate late night bus and taxi services to provide a safe journey right to the door.
- Give buses increased priority on the road by requiring drivers to give way to buses pulling out of a bus stop on roads with a speed limit of

70kph or less. This will effectively creating a bus priority lane without the need for expensive new infrastructure.

Better support for people

Other ways we will improve services include introducing:

- an easy to access journey planner, so getting from A to B is easy to plan at bus stops, on the internet, by phone or text
- a real-time passenger information systems, as is found in many other centres.
- sheltered areas and easy access to buses and trains, with places to put shopping and luggage
- covered, well-lit park and ride facilities at key locations

Smart Planning and Good Urban Design

Smart Planning

Our vision is a healthy, vibrant Wellington transport system powered by clean, renewable energy. Traffic growth can't continue forever, and no city has ever motorway-ed its way out of congestion. The Greens aim for zero traffic growth, by making alternatives for some trips easy and attractive. And with less congestion on the roads, essential car trips will be quicker and easier.

Trucks will remain the main means of short-haul freight transport and local delivery. Our transport plan will free up road space for business and commercial traffic by helping people find alternatives for commuting, shopping and school journeys.

Our priorities for investment will be different - focussed on safer, smoother travel for all road users. We will expand the use of high-occupancy vehicle and bus lanes, and prioritise sustainable transport investment ahead of roading investments that just shift traffic 'bottlenecks' (like a new Mt Victoria tunnel) or encourage urban sprawl (like Transmission Gully). Congestion charging might be one alternative, when better public transport is in place.

There are all sorts of ways to create a future that is less reliant on cars and fossil fuels, such as facilitating working from home, making it possible to live, work, play and learn in local communities, and encouraging children to walk safety to school. We need to plan to make these changes possible now. Some good examples include:

Getting to school

- Walking School Buses make it easy and fun for kids to walk to school.
- Safe Routes to School so that parents and children can walk or cycle to school with confidence.

- Getting schools involved in working out their own travel plans for staff and students.

Shopping

- Expanding on-line shopping
- Planning incentives for shops to provide home delivery rather than just parking.

Working

- Working at home sometimes and using the internet.
- Using video and audio-conferencing as a substitute for some travel
- Flexible working hours to spread out journeys.
- Getting large employers involved in co-ordinating car pooling and travel plans, and providing incentives for staff to take public transport, such as bulk fare discounts.

Getting Around

- carpooling, and car-sharing to make it easier to get around without owning a car.
- creating a downtown airport check-in with guaranteed connections so there is less need to drive to the airport

Good urban design

Our vision is all about sustainability. We live in a rapidly changing world, and we need to think about how our children and grandchildren will be affected by what we do – or fail to do – today.

Because of its geography, Wellington's natural advantages will make it a preferred place to be when New Zealand is battling climate change and soaring oil prices. The Green vision is about thinking smart. We can either spend our precious transport resources building roads for increasingly expensive car journeys, or we can start to provide people with real alternatives. Investing in alternatives now makes obvious economic sense, if we're thinking beyond tomorrow. As part of this, we want to see high quality community development within the existing regional urban boundaries.

To make this a reality, we will:

- Limit the amount of residential growth which occurs beyond Wellington's existing urban boundaries.
- Concentrate development in regional towns around existing centres, and not spread into farmland (i.e. Waikanae, Otaki, Masterton and Featherston).
- Create affordable housing, so people of all income levels can afford to live close to sustainable transport networks.
- Focus residential development on sites within existing urban boundaries, close to transport networks.
- Encourage development within regional towns (eg Waikanae, Otaki, Masterton, Featherston) that is concentrated around existing centres, rather than sprawling into surrounding farmland.

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