



Wellington transport plan

For a stronger city



GREEN PARTY ELECTION PRIORITY

Summary

The Green Party will make it easier for people in Wellington to get around cheaply and quickly with smarter, cleaner transport choices. In government, we will work with councils and communities to:

1. Build a modern, electric light-rail line, running separated from traffic, from the railway station to Newtown by 2025 and the airport by 2027.
2. Retain and expand the city's zero-emission electric bus fleet and provide more priority lanes for buses to speed up travel.
3. Improve Wellington's regional rail commuter services to Palmerston North and the Wairarapa by providing consistent funding and double tracking the line between Trentham and Upper Hutt.
4. Make Wellington a safer place to ride a bicycle with \$135 million for walking and cycling infrastructure, over ten years.

Part of what makes Wellington such a good place to live is its compact design, its walkability, and its good public transport. It's "the coolest little capital in the world" not because of its motorways or flyovers, but because of its vibrant culture, nightlife and people-friendly public places.

Wellingtonians told the Let's Get Welly Moving project that they want a compact city that's easy to get around, with more space for people and more frequent, reliable public transport. We will deliver this vision.¹

Wellington is at a crossroads. Our population is growing, our buses are at capacity and traffic is getting worse. Wider motorways and more flyovers will bring more traffic into the city. The Green Party has a different vision; where people have real choices about how to travel, where the city is vibrant and full of people, and where more space is provided for people to walk and cycle safely.

Thanks to our recently announced plan to make all buses and trains free for people under-19, all the time, and free off-peak for students, apprentices and disabled people. The Green Party will make Wellington a more affordable place to live, study and raise a family.

Situation

With National in government, Wellington's transport system has stagnated. Traffic is getting worse, buses are becoming more crowded and congested. Wellington is the only city in the world that is replacing clean, electric buses with dirty diesels.

Lambton Quay and the Golden Mile is congested with too many buses travelling along the corridor, and will face more pressure as public transport trips are forecast to increase by 22 percent by 2030.²

Wellington's streets are full of traffic, slowing down both buses and cars, and increasing pollution. This will get worse when the Transmission Gully motorway opens and 11,500 more cars flood into Wellington every morning.³

While a bus rapid-transit system would improve the situation, it has less capacity compared to light rail and won't offer the step change that Wellington needs. Proposed double-decker bus replacements will increase capacity, but they won't provide the quick boarding needed to reduce bus congestion on our busy streets.

Greater Wellington Regional Council decided to scrap Wellington's 60 electric trolley-buses and the 60km of near-new overhead wiring, replacing these with a largely diesel fleet.

Transport is already one of Wellington's main contributors to climate pollution and more diesel vehicles will make this worse.⁴ Wellington's bus routes run along the city's most densely pedestrianised spaces and diesels release carcinogenic particulates into the air.⁵ Wellington needs to build on its existing clean, electric public transport, rather than reverting to diesels.

Wellingtonians are the most enthusiastic users of public transport in the country. They deserve a decent, affordable and reliable network.

Solution

Wellington deserves a world-class network of buses, trains and safe places to cycle.

1. A modern light-rail network

The Green Party will work with councils and communities to build a modern, electric light-rail network running separated from general traffic in many places.

- Build a light-rail line from the railway station to the hospital and Newtown by 2025.
- Expand light rail to the airport by 2027.
- Commission scoping of light rail extensions (e.g. out to Island Bay, Miramar and Johnsonville).

Light rail has significantly greater capacity than bus options in Wellington. A light-rail vehicle is capable of carrying up to 400-500 people at any one time, doing the work of five buses.

Light rail can run off renewable electricity, meaning no diesel fumes and much lower carbon emissions.

Light rail would result in:

- 7 minute travel time saving between Newtown and the railway station.⁶
- A 40 percent reduction in buses on the Golden Mile.⁷
- A reduction in general car traffic in the city centre during business hours.⁸
- Reduced noise, congestion and air pollution in the city centre.
- Increased reliability for commuters travelling from the southern suburbs.

Light rail costs have fallen in recent years, making it a more affordable option.

Some previous plans lumped in the cost of an expensive second Mt Victoria tunnel. Alternative options, such as using the existing Mt Victoria bus tunnel or Constable St in Newtown could be more cost effective options.

Light rail from the railway station to Newtown and the airport will cost between \$630 million to \$700 million, depending on the route chosen.⁹

This project will be funded from the National Land Transport Fund and a contribution from local government. We will support councils to investigate new local funding tools like land value uplift capture and congestion charging if needed.



2. Electric buses

The Green Party will work with Wellington's councils to fast track a fully electric bus fleet, with a goal of 2030. Rather than waste money taking down near-new overhead wires and converting trolley buses to diesel hybrids, the Greens will use the existing trolley fleet and network as the foundation of a zero-emission public transport fleet.

In a hilly city, combining overhead power with batteries is the simplest and fastest way to get a fully electric fleet. New battery-powered buses replace dirty diesels, not existing electric buses.

We will work with Wellington councils to:

- Move rapidly to a fully electric, zero-emission public transport fleet.
- Retain and expand the existing trolley bus system, securing new vehicles that combine the ability to use the overhead wires with the latest in battery technology.
- Secure one-off NZ Transport Agency funding to help upgrade the substations and underground cables for the trolley bus network (cost \$30 to 50 million less savings from not taking down the overhead wires) and ensure ongoing maintenance and adaptation of the network is properly funded.
- Work with the regional and city council to reconfigure bus contracts to support these goals.

By 2030, most of Wellington's current diesel buses will have reached the end of their lives.¹⁰

The upgrade of substations and underground power supply has a double benefit as it will also provide important infrastructure for future light-rail development.

The Green Party will also set aside \$30 million to create more priority lanes and traffic signals for buses so that services become faster and more reliable.

3. Safer cycling

The number of people cycling in Wellington is growing, and research suggests many more people would cycle if safe, separated cycle infrastructure was built.¹¹

We will provide \$135 million in ongoing, consistent funding to improve urban cycling in Wellington over the next 10 years. This would allow councils to deliver a range of projects such as:

1. the Wellington to Hutt Valley cycleway
2. the Petone to Melling cycleway
3. the eastern suburb routes to Kilbirnie and Miramar
4. the southern suburb routes to Newtown and Island Bay
5. the Wellington CBD routes
6. the cycleway between Porirua and Paremata

We will also support local councils to reduce speed limits around schools and pedestrian areas.

4. Regional rail

The Wairarapa line has been poorly maintained for many years leading to a slower, less reliable and less punctual service.

The Green Party will:

- Invest \$21 million to build 3 km of new track between Trentham and Upper Hutt to remove the bottleneck that causes delays.
- Open the transport budget so that rail infrastructure, including the Wairarapa line, can be maintained and improved to the same standard as the roading network.

We will also investigate further expansion of electric rail services beyond existing boundaries and the need for double or third tracks in places to enable genuine express public transport.

The Capital Connection between Palmerston North and Wellington will be given consistent funding to reduce fares and improve the quality of service. The share of funding between councils and the government will be negotiated in government on the basis of a revised business case. A 2012 business case for the service estimated that government would likely need to provide between \$200,000 and \$300,000 per year to maintain the service.

Free public transport

As previously announced, with the Green Party in government, all New Zealanders under the age of 19 will be eligible for free travel on buses, trains, and commuter ferries at all times that these services operate.

All tertiary students and apprentices will be eligible for free off-peak travel on buses, trains and commuter ferries. Off-peak public transport will be free for people living with a disability on the Supported Living Benefit, and we will continue the SuperGold Card for superannuitants.

We can help take cars off the roads, unclog our cities, and make life a little easier for families, tertiary students and apprentices by making public transport free for young New Zealanders.

Free public transport for young New Zealanders nationwide will cost an estimated \$70 to \$80 million a year, which will be funded from the existing land transport budget, by reprioritising existing non-urgent spending. This is equivalent to the cost of 1km of one of National's planned low-value motorways.¹²

Savings compared to current Snapper card fares in Wellington

Tertiary student			
From	To	Per week (\$)	Per Month (\$)
Mt Cook	Vic Uni	17	66
Newtown	Vic Uni	26	105
Island Bay	Vic Uni	36	145
Lower Hutt	Vic Uni	72	230*
Island Bay	Massey Uni	28	111
Lower Hutt	Massey Uni	80	230*

School kids

From	To	Per week (\$)	Per Month (\$)
Island bay	Wgtn College	16	64
Ngaio	Wgtn College	23	93
Karori	Wgtn College	32	150*
Ngaio	Wgtn Girls	19	76
Kandalah	Wgtn Girls	19	76
Eastborne	Hutt High	19	76
Wainuiomata	Hutt High	28	110
Kapiti	Wgtn College	58	230

* Compared to monthly pass fares

For more information on our free public transport plan, see
<https://www.greens.org.nz/transport-plan>

Sources

- ¹ <http://getwellymoving.co.nz/assets/Documents/Research/FINAL-LGWM-overview-of-research-findings-300716.pdf>
- ² http://www.gwrc.govt.nz/assets/council-reports/Report_PDFs/2015.408.pdf
- ³ http://www.gwrc.govt.nz/assets/council-reports/Report_PDFs/2015.408.pdf
- ⁴ <http://wellington.govt.nz/~media/services/environment-and-waste/environment/files/greenhouse-gas-inventory-web.pdf>
- ⁵ http://www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/pr/2012/pdfs/pr213_E.pdf
- ⁶ <http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Transport/Regional-transport/PT-Spine-Study/PTSS-Final-Reports-2013/FINAL-PTSS-Summary-Report-Low-Res-for-web.pdf> p. 11
- ⁷ <http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Transport/Regional-transport/PT-Spine-Study/PTSS-Final-Reports-2013/FINAL-PTSS-Summary-Report-Low-Res-for-web.pdf>
- ⁸ <http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Transport/Regional-transport/PT-Spine-Study/PTSS-Final-Reports-2013/FINAL-PTSS-Summary-Report-Low-Res-for-web.pdf>
- ⁹ Cost estimates have been provided by FIT Wellington. Cost estimates assume \$50m per km for track and vehicles, \$115m for a double track tunnel below the Airport, and assumes 20 percent increase for design and contingency.
- ¹⁰ <http://www.gw.govt.nz/assets/Transport/Regional-transport/RPTP/GWRC-Bus-Fleet-Configurations-Final-version.pdf>, p. 6.
- ¹¹ <https://wellington.govt.nz/~media/services/parking-and-roads/cycling/files/cycling-demand-analysis-june-2014.pdf>
- ¹² Based on the cost of the 27km long, \$1.9 billion Warkworth to Wellsford motorway project:
http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=11814484

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