

Ride the wind

The Green Party's solutions to Wellington's transport problems

Our plan will give Wellington the clean, dynamic transport system it deserves—a pollution-free passenger transport network powered by wind and other forms of renewable energy.

If implemented, it will make Wellington one of the easiest places in the world to get around in.

It will encourage smart, sustainable growth throughout the region.

It will make Wellington a world leader in sustainable urban living, well equipped to cope with the realities of soaring oil prices, climate change and similar inescapable issues.

Our plan builds on our region's strengths – its compactness, existing electric transport infrastructure and clean, renewable wind energy.

It includes (see inside):

- A fleet of modern trolley buses powered by wind energy
- Light rail from Johnsonville and the Hutt into central Wellington, and beyond
- Fast, state of the art rail services as far North as Otaki and Masterton



Green MP Sue Kedgley and Wellington transport campaigner Roland Sapsford on a modern trolley bus.

A good start

Wellington has a good basic transport infrastructure which could easily be upgraded into a first class transport network. The regional electric rail system, built by previous generations, and Wellington's trolley bus network give us a head start. If we make the needed investments (see next page) we can create the most efficient transport network in New Zealand.

What will it all cost?

Much less than proposed roading - all up over ten years, about the same as four-laning the coastal section of SH1 and less than Transmission Gully. For around \$700m, the whole region can have a first class transport system that sets us up well for the future and doesn't cost the Earth. The good news is that the Government has promised almost this much already - but it will take real leadership to prioritise the plan outlined here, rather than build more big roads.

Small but perfect

Another advantage we want to build on is the compactness of our region's cities. Downtown Wellington is the hub of our region, with most of its employment, entertainment and leisure facilities – and a growing amount of residential accommodation too. All of these things are packed into one of the smallest central areas of any city in the world. Compactness makes the CBD easy to get around and gives Wellington that 'big city buzz'. The Hutt and Porirua also have strong centres which form local hubs for their thriving communities.

Our region's geography and good public transport infrastructure should make it easy to get around. But if we continue to pour in more cars into our narrow streets we will only create more and more congestion. Congestion slows everyone, and then life's not so much fun. We need to make it easier to get around without depending on cars. Our transport plan will do that, and also create a springboard for a dynamic, prosperous future for our region as it faces global challenges.

Sustainable transport

We want to power as much of our public transport network as possible by clean, renewable local wind power. Two wind turbines could power Wellington's entire trolley bus fleet. Calgary, Canada, has used a local wind farm to power its modern tram system since 2003, moving 155,000 passengers daily.

Wellington has many suitable locations for windfarms (and, of course, some that are unsuitable). Wind is 100% clean, 100% renewable, and we have plenty of it. Let's use it to power our transport system.



Two wind turbines can power 60 trolley buses

Here's how we plan to do it...



Here's how we

Modernise our rail network

Wellington's rail network has hardly been touched for 45 years and is run down. The fact it is still working is a testament to rails' longevity, but Wellington needs a modern, attractive and reliable rail service. The current rail upgrade programme is a welcome start but much more is required to create the rail system Wellington needs.

A more direct connection

- Enhance services on the Johnsonville line, the Hutt lines, and from Plimmerton/Pukerua Bay with comfortable modern trams (light rail)
- Create a light rail service through central Lower Hutt by linking the Melling Line with Waterloo station along existing streets
- Extend these light rail services through to Courtenay Place, and then beyond

Faster long-distance services

- Upgrade track and purchase new electric units for high speed running on longer distance services beyond Upper Hutt and Pukerua Bay
- Extend electric rail services from Upper Hutt to Featherston then on to Masterton
- Extend electric rail services on the Kapiti rail line to Waikanae then on to Otaki

Upgrade the infrastructure

- Upgrade all rail stations in the Wellington region and provide safe, high quality access
- Allow faster, more frequent passenger services (and shift more freight onto rail) on the Kapiti line by duplicating the rail track from Pukerua Bay to Paekakariki and from McKays Crossing to Lindale
- 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 and link with light rail services



Our vision: a reliable, attractive and affordable rail service connecting the main regional centres using local renewable energy.

Modern electric buses powered by wind

Electric trolley buses are by far the most efficient and non polluting means of using renewable power for bus services. Our recent Green petition showed there is strong public support for an upgraded trolleybus system. As the price of oil rises, climate change bites, and wind power comes on stream, electric buses will also be the cheapest.

Trolleys will remain the core of our electric bus network. Where trolleys are impractical, we need to look at high efficiency, low emission diesel engines, LPG and CNG. Over the next ten years we need to shift to hybrid buses, running on biodiesel, or even fuel cells, running off fuel generated by renewable energy.

- Speed-up plans to introduce 60 new state-of-the art trolleybuses and buy another 30 New Zealand-made modern, high-capacity trolleybuses for the main routes
- Improve reliability by revamping the overhead wires and power supply systems
- Introduce trolley buses on more busy bus routes in Wellington City and throughout in the region
- Expand bus services with more suburb-to-suburb services (as other cities are already doing), including a "round the beaches" 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
- Set and enforce emission and efficiency goals for non-trolley services
- Fund trials of new technologies such as bio-diesel and hybrid engines.



Our vision: most bus passenger travel provided by electric buses that are powered by wind generation



e plan to do it

Safe roads with stable traffic flows

Trucks are and will remain the main means of short-haul freight transport and local delivery. Cars in some form will always be popular, and most efficient, for many personal transport journeys. But traffic growth cannot, and will not, continue for ever. And no city has ever motorway-ed its way out of congestion. Either we aim for zero traffic growth and make alternatives for some trips easy and attractive, or we end up with gridlock and economic stagnation as the era of cheap oil draws to a close.

- Focus road investment on improving safety and creating smooth stable traffic flows
- Increase investment in creating liveable streets and more 30km/hr zones
- Free up road space for business and commercial traffic by helping people find alternatives for commuting, shopping and school journeys
- Expand the use of high-occupancy vehicle lanes and bus lanes.
- Avoid roading investments that just shift bottlenecks
- (eg a new Mt Victoria tunnel) or encourage more traffic growth and urban sprawl (eg Transmission Gully)
- Examine the use of congestion charging once better public transport and other alternatives are well-established
- Provide more covered “park and ride” facilities
- Encourage car pooling and other trip-sharing ideas
- Improve traffic flows through greater signal coordination, including in the evenings and weekends

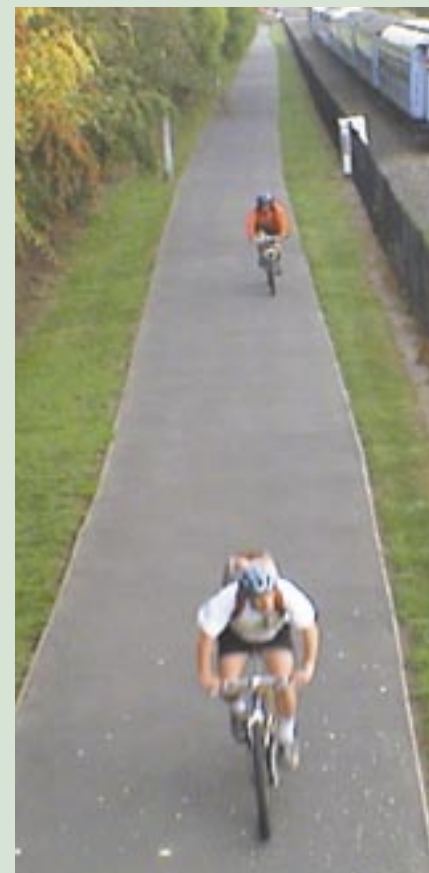


Our vision: stable traffic volumes on existing roads, enabling easy access for everyone.

Walking + Cycling = clean, healthy, efficient transport

We need more walking and cycling, and not just because it is clean and relatively cheap. Public health experts warn of the human and financial cost of inactive lifestyles. Obesity and Type-II diabetes are fast-growing epidemics. Building more physical activity into daily life is an effective way of controlling the epidemic. Walking and cycling, and a walkable, Euro-style ‘café culture’ also makes our cities more liveable and people-friendly.

- Give pedestrians priority in dense inner-city streets
- Design streets, and the connections between them, to encourage walking
- Increase investment in creating liveable streets and more 30km/hr zones
- Clear the air with emission standards for all vehicles by mid-2006
- Give local councils financial incentives to promote a ‘cycling culture’ in their urban centres, including more secure cycle parks
- Complete and upgrade the Hutt to Wellington cycleway, and signpost routes to the Kapiti Coast
- Carry bicycles free of charge on trains and provided secure storage at stations. Buses should also be able to carry prams and bikes where practicable
- Create on and off-road cycle arterial routes with signs and appropriate road layout
- Provide cycle phases on lights at key intersections
- Encourage walking and cycling to and from schools with more Safe Routes to School and Walking School Buses



Our vision: Walking and cycling are the safest, most attractive ways of making shorter journeys and are well-used for recreation and longer trips.



Reducing our need to use cars

As oil prices rise, we will need to reduce our dependence on cars and make as many journeys as possible by public transport, cycling or walking. And if we can help some people find alternatives to driving for some trips, everybody will benefit and congestion will decline. We only need to find alternatives for a few people to make a big difference to congestion.

There are all sorts of ways of reducing our dependence on cars –working from home, living closer to our work, encouraging children to walk safely to school. We need to plan to make these changes now.

Getting to School

- Walking School Buses to 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

- Shopping from home, using the internet
- Planning incentives for shops to provide home delivery rather than just parking
- Encouraging the use of taxis rather than private cars

Working

- Working at home sometimes, using the internet
- Flexible working hours to spread out journeys
- Incentives for large employers to encourage their staff to take public transport, by providing bulk fare discounts for employees.
- Getting workplaces involved in working out their own travel plans to reduce the need for car trips

Planning for ease of use

- Encouraging communities with homes, shops and workplaces close together, so getting together is easy on foot – as is happening in central Wellington.
- Localisation and densification around rail stations, generally as a commercial development strategy

Facing up to the real costs

- Congestion charging – such as in London – cuts congestion markedly, provided real alternatives are available. Its an option once public transport and other facilities have been upgraded.

Our Vision: A region where its easy to shop, work, and travel without a car most of the time.



Smart growth

The Green vision is all about sustainability. We reject the ‘short-term’ thinking that refuses to recognise a changing world and doesn’t consider how our children and grandchildren will be affected by what we do – or fail to do - today.

Our vision: Wellington builds on its head start to become a world leader in sustainable urban living, using our existing strengths of compactness, electric transport and clean renewable power.

One thing is for sure – business won’t be “as usual” in 2020. A sustainable vision extends over at least 50 years, not the 5 or 10 preferred by most politicians. Within 20 years we can be almost certain that at least the following will occur:

- Climate change will be affecting all of our lives
- Oil production will peak and then fall way below existing demand

While political capital is made out of the cost of Kyoto, the fact is the next two decades will see severe weather events (drought and storms) becoming more frequent and sea levels rising. We need to prepare our society and our transport system for the fact that burning fossil fuels will carry a cost to our economy, our environment and our whole planet.

Meanwhile oil prices are at record highs and the days of cheap oil are over. Higher oil prices means higher prices not just for liquid fuels but also for commodities made from oil - plastics, fertilisers, paint etc. We need to think 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, and encourage freight onto energy efficient rail and coastal shipping. Investing in alternatives now makes obvious economic sense if we can think beyond tomorrow

Wellington has natural advantages that will make the region the preferred place to be when New Zealand is facing the realities of soaring oil prices, climate change and similar inescapable issues. But urban sprawl is the enemy of sustainability. Low density housing spreading further and further out means the loss of farmland and open space, more long-distance driving, clogged roads, more energy use and more pollution – and less walking, cycling and public transport.

We want to see high quality community development within the existing regional urban boundaries.

We say:

- Limiting the amount of residential growth which occurs beyond the existing urban boundaries must be a priority for the Wellington Region
- Regional towns (Waikanae, Otaki, Masterton, Featherston etc) should concentrate development around existing centres, not spread into farmland.
- ‘Affordable housing’ policies should ensure that people of all income levels can choose to live in the inner city. It is not only the ‘rich’ who want to live downtown!



Public Transport made easy!

One ticket – one ride, whether you need to go by bus, train, ferry or a combination. This is called integrated ticketing and will be familiar to kiwis who have visited Melbourne, London and many other centres.

Up to date, reliable information – at bus stops, over the internet and by phone or txt. Today’s public transport system needs real-time passenger information while you ride and while you wait, and great information about the fastest ways from A to B.

Easy access – buses that are easy to get on and off for everyone, with places to put shopping and luggage, trains, modern trams and platforms that are easy to get on and off, with easy, sheltered access.

Simple, regular connections – easy to understand, reliable connections with as little waiting as possible when you need to change bus or train. Rich cities and poor cities around the world manage this – so can Wellington!



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