Christchurch transport plan
For a stronger city
Summary

Christchurch has the potential to become the most liveable, sustainable city in New Zealand, but it needs a supportive Government that’s willing to work with councils and communities towards these goals.

The Green Party will invest over $400 million in Christchurch transport to make it easier for people to get around cheaply and quickly by bike, bus, and train.

In government, we will:

1. Establish three new rapid transit lines in Christchurch by 2022:
   a. The Northern Line – passenger rail from Rangiora to the city
   b. The Southern Line – passenger rail from Rolleston to the city
   c. The Airport Line – bus rapid transit from the city to the Airport

2. Invest $1 billion nationwide, including $135 million in Christchurch, to create safe, city-wide cycling networks for all ages and abilities. This will prioritise:
   a. The completion of Christchurch’s 13 major cycle routes
   b. Investment into cycling infrastructure around schools

3. Work with Christchurch City Council (CCC) to establish a city-wide bike share agreement.

4. Provide free public transport, all the time, to all young people 18 and under via a Youth Green Card.

5. Provide free public transport, during off-peak hours, for all tertiary students and apprentices via a Student Green Card, as well as for people living with a disability on the Supported Living Benefit.

In addition, better funding will enable more frequent buses on existing routes.
Situation

After the 2010 and 2011 Canterbury earthquakes Christchurch City Council asked the people of Christchurch how they would like to see the city rebuilt through Share an Idea.

Share an Idea attracted more than 106,000 ideas, and overwhelmingly people called for:

- A green, people-focused city with public spaces free from cars.
- Transport choices, including safe cycle lanes and high quality public transport.
- A vibrant urban life with appealing streetscapes, cafes and more room for people walking.¹

Transport is at the heart of this vision for a more people-focused city. Cantabrians clearly recognise that providing reliable, attractive public transport, and ensuring people feel safe to cycle will mean less traffic, less noise, less pollution in the city, and more space for people and life.

While some of these ideas have been implemented in Christchurch, this vision has run into conflict with the National Government’s transport strategy. Instead of prioritising high-quality, attractive public transport, National embarked on a $900 million motorway programme in Christchurch.²

No comparable investment has gone into improving Christchurch’s public transport. A focus on reducing costs rather than rebuilding ridership has seen bus services become less frequent and reliable, public transport ‘dead zones’ in the city, and fewer people using public transport.³
Day-to-day traffic in Christchurch is getting worse despite a number of expensive motorway projects.

For commuters travelling from Rangiora into the city, the morning commute now averages 44 minutes, 10 minutes longer than it was in 2008. Commutes of over an hour are not uncommon, and buses remain stuck in the same congested traffic providing little congestion relief.

For commuters from Rolleston into the central city the morning commute has also become longer, increasing by an average of more than seven minutes since 2008.

**Cycling**
Christchurch, along with a number of other towns and cities, has enjoyed much needed investment in safe cycling infrastructure. But Christchurch still has a long way to go to achieve a well-connected cycle network to make cycling a safe, viable way of getting around for people of all ages and abilities.

To date, cycling investment has focused on a few key routes, primarily for commuter and recreational cyclists. This is not surprising as the National Government’s transport strategy directs all cycling investment towards “accessing employment” and makes no mention of trips to school.

Since the 1980s there has been a dramatic fall in the number of children who walk or cycle to school. In 1989, half of all kids cycled or walked to school and a third came by car. Today those numbers have reversed. In that time, traffic on our streets has more than doubled and we still only have a patchwork of safe cycling routes for kids to use.

The Green Party has a vision where safe cycling and walking to school is the best option for all children.
Solution

The Green Party will prioritise what matters to the people of Christchurch and help develop a people-centred, green city with real transport choices, less traffic, and more green space for people.

We will rebalance transport investment in the city by prioritising investment to create a high quality, rapid, public transport network, and a comprehensive cycling network and bike share scheme. Better funding will enable more frequent buses on existing routes.

Planned Christchurch Transport Investment to 2027

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Airport Line - Rapid bus line</td>
<td>$90 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Line - Passenger Rail</td>
<td>$45 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Line - Passenger Rail</td>
<td>$45 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycling infrastructure</td>
<td>$135 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City-wide Bike Share Scheme</td>
<td>$1.5 million - $3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional (unallocated) public transport investment</td>
<td>$100 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$418 million</td>
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</tbody>
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All government funding will come from reallocating funding within the National Land Transport Fund. As in other major cities, we will support councils to investigate new local funding tools if they are needed, such as land value uplift capture and congestion charging.

A Congestion Free Network

The Green Party will work with local councils to develop a city-wide vision and plan for a rapid network of public transport routes and feeder services. The first step will be to work with councils to set a single transport body for Christchurch – Canterbury Transport – responsible for transport planning, strategy, and delivery across the greater Christchurch area.

Responsibility for transport planning, strategy and delivery in greater Christchurch is currently spread over six different agencies, each with its own plans and priorities. The new Canterbury Transport agency will retain democratic accountability.
New Rapid Transit Lines
The Green Party will fast-track the building of three rapid transit lines to establish a core congestion free public transport network by 2022.

1. The Northern Line – Rangiora to city
2. The Southern Line – Rolleston to city
3. The Airport Line – city to Airport

Northern and Southern Lines
The Green Party will leverage off the existing heavy rail freight network in Christchurch and establish two new passenger rail lines connecting Rangiora in the north and Rolleston in the south west.

The Northern Line will travel from Rangiora to Addington via Kaiapoi, Belfast, Northlands Mall, and Riccarton.

The Southern Line will travel from Rolleston to Moorhouse Ave, via Templeton, Hornby, and Addington.
The Northern Line will take less than 30 minutes to travel from Rangiora to Riccarton, including all station stops. This will be at least 15 minutes faster than a similar journey by car, and 30 minutes to an hour faster than by bus. The Northern Line will connect in Riccarton to a rapid bus line (discussed below) allowing quick transfer into the central city or on to the airport.

The Southern Line covers a shorter distance and should take approximately 20 minutes to travel from Rolleston to Moorhouse Avenue. This would make it competitive with a car journey over a similar distance, and more than half an hour faster than existing public transport services.

The Green Party will allocate $90 million to progress these two services over the next five years. Services could feasibly begin within a year, running on a limited timetable. The $90 million investment would cover the following improvements:

- refurbishment of ex-Auckland commuter trains
- new station platforms
- double tracking of rail lines to create passing loops
- upgrading signalling on the lines.

Long-term, there is the potential for services to extend to Lyttelton and the rail lines to be electrified. This would be similar to the development of passenger rail in Auckland.

**Airport Line**

The Green Party will also prioritise a new rapid transit line from the city to the airport by 2022, initially using high-capacity electric or hybrid electric tram-buses. Buses would be separated from traffic along much of the route, and have raised station-style stops for fast boarding.

Buses would run every five minutes during peak times, travelling from the central city to the Airport via Riccarton Mall, Canterbury University, and Memorial Avenue.

Articulated buses have capacity to carry between 140 and 250 passengers per vehicle. The infrastructure needed to create a rapid bus line would allow for the route to be upgraded to light rail in the future.
A dedicated, rapid bus route will support the development of new business and medium density housing along this route close to the university and central city. It will also connect the Northern rail line to the city and airport.

We estimate the cost at $79 million to build new dedicated busway and bus priority infrastructure, including platforms, along the 12 km route. We expect 13 modern articulated buses would be needed costing around $10.5 million in total.
Safer cycling

Cycling investment
Christchurch’s climate and topography is ideally suited for cycling and the city has the potential to become the most bike friendly city in New Zealand. The Green Party has committed to investing over $1 billion right across New Zealand over the next 10 years to make cycling a safe, easy to use form of transport. We will work with local councils and communities to identify the best ways to invest.

In Christchurch, the Green Party will invest $135 million over this period on safe cycling infrastructure across the city.

All our nationwide cycling investment is reprioritised from non-urgent and low value projects in the existing land transport budget. A $1 billion investment in cycling right across the country is equivalent to the cost of just 3 km of National’s planned East-West Link road in Auckland.

Bike share for Christchurch
The Green Party is committed to working with Christchurch City Council to deliver a comprehensive bike share scheme for Christchurch.

A bike share scheme will allow people to rent bikes on an as-needed basis, without the costs and responsibilities of bike ownership. The system allows for users to subscribe for an annual pass and then make unlimited trips of up to 30-40 minutes before incurring a small fee.

Bike share schemes have proven incredibly successful in many cities across the world, and help to fill in the gaps of the public transport system by offering transport over the final leg of the trip. Bike share also allows more flexibility, e.g. by allowing people to bike to work and catch the bus home.

A minimum of 250 to 350 bikes would be rolled out in the central city and surrounding suburbs, with around 10 drop off points per kilometre. We expect the cost of rolling out the bike share scheme to be minimal, in the order of $1.5 to $3 million.
A successful pilot scheme has already run in Christchurch for two years, achieving high rates of use, comparable with much larger systems in Australia and Europe.\textsuperscript{11}

We will work with the council to develop a governance and ownership model for the infrastructure and operation of the service.

We will support other bike share programmes across New Zealand where communities and councils want them and can make a good case.

**Complete the major cycleways**

We will work with the City Council to complete the 13 Major Cycle Routes in Christchurch. Most of these have either been completed, are under construction, or have had some degree of design and investigation completed.

1. Papanui Parallel (open)
2. Little River Link (open)
3. Northern Line Cycleway
4. South Express
5. Ōpāwaho River Route
6. Uni-Cycle
7. Quarryman’s Trail
8. Nor’West Arc
9. Avon-Ōtākaro Route
10. Rapanui-Shag Rock Cycleway
11. Heathcote Expressway
12. Southern Lights
13. Wheels to Wings

More information on these planned cycleways is available at [https://www.ccc.govt.nz/transport/cycling/major-cycle-routes/cycle-routes](https://www.ccc.govt.nz/transport/cycling/major-cycle-routes/cycle-routes)

**Safe to school**

There has been a dramatic decrease in the number of children both walking and cycling to school in Christchurch. The Green Party will refocus more investment to create safe cycling corridors to schools and help give kids a safe, healthy way to get to school under their own steam, in Christchurch and nationwide.
Cycling investment in recent years has focused heavily on commuter and recreational cycling. Focusing investment on school trips will mean adding feeder routes to-and-from major cycle routes and making sure the whole journey is safe.

The Green party will make 30 km/h the default speed limit outside schools nationwide, so that schools don’t have to go through a frequently unsuccessful application process just to make the street out front safe.
Free public transport

The Green Party will give all young people 18 years and under a Youth Green Card, allowing them to use public transport for free all the time, as previously announced.

Currently one in three cars in the morning peak is a trip to school. Free public transport for this age group has the potential to make a serious dent in the morning rush hour traffic.

The Green Party also will make students and apprentices eligible for free off-peak travel on buses and trains. This will apply to all students attending universities, polytechnics, private training establishments and wānanga, as well as those training through New Zealand apprenticeships.

Living costs for students have increased significantly in recent years and the average student spends about $33 per week on transport.12

We will also extend free off-peak transport to people living with a disability on the Supported Living Benefit. It will not only give people living with a disability more independence, it will also make our cities more accessible.

Combined, free public transport for young New Zealanders and students will cost an estimated $70-$80 million a year. This is funded from the existing land transport budget by reprioritising non-urgent spending. This cost is equivalent to 1 km of one of National’s planned low-value motorways.13
Sources

6. Christchurch City Council (CCC) is responsible for public transport infrastructure (e.g. bus stops) and the major cycleways. Environment Canterbury (Ecan) is responsible for the provision of public transport services. The NZ Transport Agency (NZTA) is responsible for roads and highways and commuter cycleways. The Stronger Christchurch Infrastructure Rebuild Team (SCRIT) is responsible for the rebuild of underground infrastructure and associated repairs. The Christchurch Central Development Unit (CCDU) is responsible for transport within the central city. Finally, the Christchurch Transport Operations Centre is responsible for day to day monitoring and management of the road network to reduce congestion.
8. There is no official journey estimate time along this rail line. We’ve assumed a 20 minute travel time as the line travels a shorter distance than the Northern rail line, that’s estimated to take 30 minutes.
10. See page 32 of the February 2017 Greater Christchurch Public Transport Join Committee minutes.
11. https://c3n8a8por7vhmx.cloudfront.net/students/pages/194/attachments/original/1491392091/Income_Expenditure_Report_2017_for_online_publish.pdf?1491392091
12. Based on the cost of the 27 km, $1.9 billion Warkworth to Wellsford motorway project: