

# Living Streets Aotearoa



## Submission from Living Streets Aotearoa on Greater Wellington public transport fares review

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### Submission

Living Streets Aotearoa thanks the committee for this opportunity to submit on the public transport fare changes.

We support the review and proposed fare changes in general but there are some significant disparities that should be addressed. We support a policy to encourage more public transport use, more off peak use and greater use of electronic ticketing, which should be extended to all services including After Midnight and ferry services.

We support a discount for tertiary students provided that an equitable fare structure across the region and between services is achieved first.

Some of the benefits of the proposals include standardising the various discounts and extending the rail monthly tickets to include feeder buses.

Two additional discounts should be considered for:

- Children to travel free on weekends with an adult using a pass or paying full fare (say up to 3 children). This would encourage a much greater use of public transport instead of the spike in weekend car use observed.
- Cash fares are more used by people on lower income who can not afford a large payment for monthly or other fares. There should be the ability to discount cash fares if a community services card is presented.

The issues that need to be addressed include:

#### Farebox recovery rate

- The farebox recovery rate should be similar to other parts of NZ of around 50% to really encourage use of public transport.

#### Zone equity

- Fares should be about the same price depending on distance travelled. So the smaller Wellington zones would be cheaper per zone than the larger zones out of the city. This would provide fare equity and be mode neutral.

#### Rail to bus connections

- Tickets should extend bus connections with rail monthly passes to cover all Zones, including at the Wellington end and travel in any direction (ie to or from Wellington)

#### Rail to rail connections

- Tickets should cover transfer between trains

#### Bus monthly passes

- retain and standardise 30-day bus passes so that they are available throughout the bus network, at the same prices as rail monthlies for the comparable distance travelled, to provide equity for Wellington bus users. Bus users will at best see a 3% increase, or greater through the abolition of 30-day passes. This mainly affects Wellington city residents (and also Eastbourne ones) who already pay a significant premium through Zones 1-3 being substantially smaller than other zones.

#### Park and ride provision

- ratepayer subsidised 'free' parking is provided at railway stations for some users and should be accounted for. While the extension of monthly passes to feeder buses goes some way to reduce parking demand, there will still be a significant subsidy to private car users. To include all public-transport-relevant costs and benefits, this should be addressed by charging for the parking, at (say) the fare for one zone. This would mean that those who benefit from parking would contribute specifically towards it, or be incentivised to use feeder bus services or walk to the station. Charging for parking would be one way to fund a reduced farebox rate return.

#### Discounted fares for people who are blind or disabled

- we support discounted fares for people with disabilities. This should be extended to include people using Total Mobility services, and carers of these people who should be eligible to a discounted companion card pass. These discounts should be available all day so that travel to work is possible (not just 9-3pm).

#### School children discount

- we support the discount for all school children of at least 50% for all zones. There should be equity across all PT travel for children to encourage maximum use of public transport. PT should be the easiest mode of travel for children next to walking. A target of 90% PT and/or walk travel for child PT use should be part of this proposal.

#### School term passes

- We do not support removing the school passes. Many child bus users rely on this means to get to school in Wellington. There is insufficient data provided to support this measure. School children should have priority in discounts ahead of tertiary students.

#### Metlink explorer day passes

- we support the ability to take one child in addition to the day pass. This should be extended as suggested above on weekends.

The following table 1 shows the disparities between current fares and services. We support all fares and zones being comparable across the region – no area should be subsidised by others. This is important to promote true cost accounting across the region and support good compact urban design and PT use.

*Table 1 – high-level comparison of bus, train and ferry attributes (by Mike Mellor)*

	Bus	Train	Ferry
Attribute			
Monthly passes	No	Yes	Yes
Off-peak fares	Yes	Yes	No
Speed	Slow	Fast	Fast
High frequency	Some	Peak only	No
Electric vehicles	A few planned	Nearly all	No
Stops with shelters	Some	All	Few
Stops with lighting	Most	All	All
Stops with consistent easy access	Few	All	Some
Stops with Park and Ride	No	Yes	No
Stops with RTI	Some	Most	Few
On-board information	No	Yes	No
On-board comfort	Medium	High	Medium

Buses are slower; with no on-board information; worse riding and with much less legroom; much more noise, vibration and emissions (unless fully electric); less accessible, with inferior stops and shelter; no park and ride subsidised facilities; and no passes. The only area in which buses are superior is in frequency.

We would like to be heard in support of our submission.

### **About Living Streets**

Living Streets Aotearoa is New Zealand’s national walking and pedestrian organisation, providing a positive voice for people on foot and working to promote walking friendly planning and development around the country. Our vision is “More people choosing to walk more often and enjoying public places”.

The objectives of Living Streets Aotearoa are:

- to promote walking as a healthy, environmentally-friendly and universal means of transport and recreation
- to promote the social and economic benefits of pedestrian-friendly communities
- to work for improved access and conditions for walkers, pedestrians and runners including walking surfaces, traffic flows, speed and safety
- to advocate for greater representation of pedestrian concerns in national, regional and urban land use and transport planning.

For more information, please see: [www.livingstreets.org.nz](http://www.livingstreets.org.nz)