Public Transport Discussion Paper Summary

Adelaide has a multi-modal public transport network consisting of buses, trams and trains. The State Government has primary responsibility for the planning and operation of public transport services across Greater Adelaide.

The City of Adelaide (CoA) has a key role to play in advocating for improved service coverage and frequency, and oversees key aspects of the network infrastructure, especially the on-street conditions, such as bus lane and traffic signal priority, and stops within the city.

The network is radial, meaning most services connect to or through the CoA.

While being multi-modal, the network is underpinned by a strong reliance on buses, including the O-Bahn bus service.

Public transport network expansion and service improvements are a key priority for the CoA.

Most CoA residents have *above average* access to public transport services[1]. However, Greater Adelaide has a low mode share of public transport for journey to work overall and ranks below its peer cities for network performance[1]. Public transport use by CoA residents is on the increase, and there is an opportunity to increase the public transport mode share for journey to work as well as trips within the CoA.

CoA resident public transport travel to work 12% (2021, 2016) 10% (2011)

130,000 workers in the City of Adelaide (2021) increasing to 150,000 workers by 2036 (City Plan)

5% of workers live in the CoA = 6,800

43% of workers live in adjacent suburbs = 55,000

[2]

For Greater Adelaide, public transport is accessible, with many people living close to public transport stops. However, the perception of these services can be poor due to infrequent services, transfer issues and long travel times. The convenience of driving and perceived and/or real barriers to public transport use contributes to higher levels of driving.

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[1] SNAMUTS Composite Index (2021)
[2] Method of Travel to Work, Census 2021, Australian Bureau of Statistics
[3] City of Adelaide. (2023). City User Profile 2023.

Public Transport Discussion Paper Summary - September 2024

How do people travel to the City of Adelaide?

The CoA *City User Profile* reports that public transport is the most commonly used mode of transport to the city, followed by driving and walking.
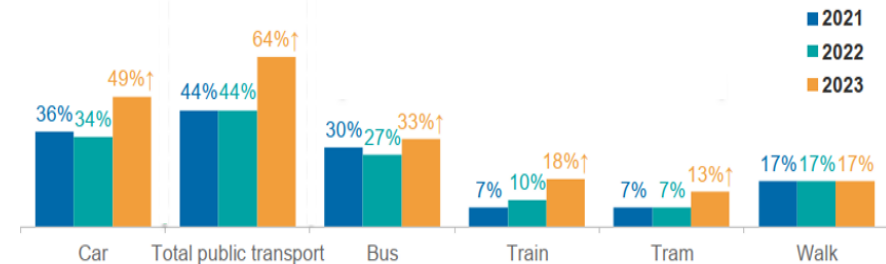
Residents	Workers	Students	Visitors
63%	75%	98%	57% 57%
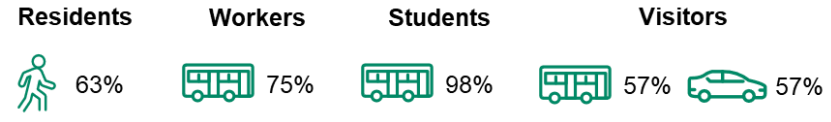
"Visitors" does not include those who live, work or study in the CoA. Total exceeds 100% because survey permitted multiple trip responses for one journey, e.g. public transport, drive, Park and Ride (both)

How do visitors* to the City of Adelaide travel?

There is a sustained shift in modal choice by city visitors*. The share of people using public transport is increasing[4].

Additionally, the majority of public high school students in CoA catch public transport to and from school[5].

Totals exceed 100% because survey permitted multiple responses. An increase in travel by car in 2023 could be a result of greater use of park and ride or park and walk options.[6]
* Visitors does not include those who live, work or study in the CoA

Benefits

Research shows that cities with high public transport mode share are more likely to experience the following key benefits[7]:

Urban liveability and accessibility

- Improved access to key employment centres, services and entertainment.
- Reduced time lost to travel, and more reliable journey times.
- Places are more likely to be designed for people, as less road space is required for private vehicles.

Environmental

- Reduced carbon emissions, and improved air quality
- Reduced noise pollution
- Higher likelihood of meeting climate goals.

Economic

- Decreased congestion, resulting in less travel time for users, including freight and essential services
- Improved connection to employment
- Time spent on public transport can be more productive.

Equity and Health

- Lower isolation and improved mental health outcomes
- Lower stress associated with time on public transport
- Public health benefits with higher levels of active travel for access to and from stops / stations
- Increased mobility and social participation for older adults
- Greater transport choice for all.

The CoA strategic objectives support increasing public transport mode share to create a network that is inclusive of all ages and abilities.

More people using public transport means fewer private vehicles on our roads. This results in lower congestion, emissions, and better place, environmental and economic outcomes for our city.

Cities with more available transport choices provide people who don't have access to a car with the opportunity to complete multiple tasks within a single journey made of multiple trips.

Committee for Adelaide benchmarking 2023

10th out of 15 peers* when considering speed and reach of public transport networks.

Hours lost to congestion has **increased** since 2019. Adelaide is the **only** peer city where this has occurred.

6th out of 7 peer cities when comparing the speed of shift to more sustainable modes.

*Examples of Adelaide's peers include Auckland, Bilbao, Portland and Edmonton [8]

Challenges and issues

Adelaide is lagging in the shift to sustainable modes due to several challenges:

Operational

- Bus and tram delays resulting from public transport not always being prioritised above general traffic (e.g. traffic signal phasing and dedicated bus lanes)
- Low service frequencies outside peak periods
- Conflicts with vehicles, both parked and turning, due to the high number of properties requiring access.

Infrastructure

- Poor interchange and door-to-door experience, including congested, unsheltered waiting spaces and narrow footpaths.

Safety and social inclusion

- Safe and efficient access to and from public transport stops and stations is not always prioritised. This includes no or misaligned crossing points between stop pairs, lack of wayfinding and insufficient queuing space for people waiting conflicting with other path uses.
- Personal safety issues stem from a lack of night-time infrastructure such as lighting and CCTV at stops, and lower service frequency after dark resulting in passengers often waiting longer at stops.
- Public transport is vital for social inclusion and accessibility, to cater for an ageing population, people with disability, and for children to get to and from school, and for recreation and social purposes.

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[7] BMC Public Health (2018), Built & natural environment planning principles for promoting health

[8] Benchmarking Adelaide (2023), Committee for Adelaide

Connectivity

- Coverage within the CBD forces people to walk long distances or change services through inefficient transfers. It is common to require two or even three changes of service to reach a certain part of the city.

- All trains terminate at Adelaide Train Station in the north-west of the CBD, whilst trams terminate in the northern section of the CBD.

Case Study: Wellington, New Zealand

Wellington has very similar characteristics to Adelaide's bus network – high accessibility, but low uptake. About 97% of Wellingtonians live within easy walking distance of a bus stop, but only 37% of people use the bus when travelling to the central city in the morning. This results in around 70,000 bus trips per day, with nearly a third for education.

It was identified that travel time reliability in the city centre was becoming less predictable and that improving this would support uptake, and make buses more attractive than driving. A Bus Priority Action Plan was developed to will make bus trips more reliable and faster on the busiest routes in Wellington. Recommendations in the Plan included:

- Bus lanes, clearways and transit lanes
- Traffic light timing changes to prioritise buses
- In-lane bus stops (the bus stops in the traffic lane to pick up/drop off)
- On-street parking adjustments
- The spacing and quantity of bus stops.

Opportunities

To achieve our vision for the future of Adelaide, there is an opportunity to develop a reliable and frequent public transport network, with a positive door to door experience, that can enable greater transport choice for our community.

Three **key strategic moves** have been identified to realise this opportunity:

Improve public transport infrastructure

Upgrade infrastructure to prioritise public transport efficiency, interchange experience and pedestrian amenity along key public transport corridors within the City. This may include provision of more comfortable and weather protected stops and interchanges, formalised and safer crossings and prioritisation of public transport movements over general traffic (e.g. dedicated bus lanes and traffic signal priority).

Enhance public transport customer experience

Create safe, comfortable and attractive urban environments along key public transport corridors and better integrate active transport and micro mobility trips with public transport to support a multi-modal network with great door-to-door user experience.

Advocacy and partnerships with State Government

Opportunities exist for the CoA to advocate for and partner with State Government to investigate improving existing public transport corridors (e.g. Currie-Grenfell bus corridor), create new light-rail connections within the City and to adjoining inner suburbs (e.g. Prospect, inner East and the Airport) and improve network-wide integration between transport modes. CoA could also advocate for improvements to public transport through increased off peak service frequencies.