

Report No.	19-101
Information Only - No Decision Required	

GREEN TRAVEL CARD

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report is to inform the Committee of the recent central government work stream on the Green Transport Card.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommends that Council:

- a. receives the information contained in Report No. 19-101.

3. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 3.1. There is no financial impact to Council as a result of this report. However should a Green Transport Card be introduced there may be financial implications which are briefly touched on below.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 4.1. No community engagement is required as a result of this report.

5. SIGNIFICANT BUSINESS IMPACT

- 5.1 There is no significant business risk impact as a result of this report.

6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1. Government is investigating the introduction of a **Green Transport Card (green card)** to reduce the costs of public transport for low-income households.
- 6.2. This stems from an agreement in the Confidence and Supply Agreement between the Labour Party and Green Party to “investigate a Green Transport Card as part of work to reduce the cost of public transport, prioritising people in low-income households and people on a benefit”.
- 6.3. The green card primarily aims to improve the wellbeing of low-income households and people on a benefit, by making the costs of using public transport more affordable.
- 6.4. By supporting public transport as a preferred mode of urban travel, it will also have co-benefits for improving people’s health, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and managing congestion.
- 6.5. The investigation is looking at targeting the green card at **Community Services Card (CSC)** holders, and their dependent children (under 18 years of age). CSC holders include people who are on a low income, or receive a benefit/allowance due to hardship.
- 6.6. CSC holders do not currently receive public transport fare concessions on most of New Zealand’s public transport networks. They pay the same fares as people from wealthier households, even though transport is essential to access the opportunities that they need. In the Horizons region however a concession is offered to CSC holders.

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- 6.7. SuperGold card holders who also have a CSC would not be entitled to a green card, as they can already use their SuperGold card to travel fare-free on public transport during off-peak periods.

7. INVESTIGATION

- 7.1 The investigation is exploring various options for the green card concessions. These options are summarised in the following table:

<i>Option 1</i>	Align the green card with the SuperGold card concessions <i>Free off-peak travel only</i>
<i>Option 2</i>	50% discount on adult cash fares at any time of day <i>The size of the discount could potentially be scaled up or down</i>
<i>Option 3*</i>	A monthly or annual public transport allowance <i>*The practicalities of this option are being explored at a high-level before determining whether it should be investigated fully, alongside other options</i>
And, options for dependents of CSC holders	
<i>Option A</i>	Dependents can only travel with CSC holders
<i>Option B</i>	Dependents have their own card and can travel any time of day

- 7.2 The options will be assessed against their potential social impacts, transport impacts, ease of implementation, and value for money.
- 7.1. The investigation is identifying implementation challenges associated with the green card, and how these could potentially be addressed.
- 7.2. Key aspects being investigated include:
- estimating how much the green card could cost to implement, including both direct costs (public transport subsidies) and indirect costs (e.g. adapting ticketing systems).
 - potential impacts on existing public transport capacities.
 - operational/implementation issues, including integration with existing cards and ticketing systems, and how travellers will demonstrate their eligibility for the green card concessions.
 - simplicity of the system to implement and track expenditure and patronage.

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8. FUNDING

- 8.1 Central government has indicated an intention to cover the costs of the green card. No decisions have been made about how central government would fund the green card, if it is implemented.
- 8.1. Funding options will be considered as part of the green card investigation.
- 8.2. The green card could potentially be funded through the **National Land Transport Fund (NLTF)**.
- 8.3. Central Government has already indicated that the green card would not be funded through the NLTF before the next Government Policy Statement on Land Transport is implemented in 2021-22.

9. FUTURE TIMELINE

- 9.1 Ministry of Transport will develop a Cabinet Paper in June 2019, based on the investigation, with recommended options for Government to consider.
- 9.2 The investigation is also exploring whether it could be feasible to implement the green card from mid-2021 onwards, if Cabinet agrees to implement and fund the card.

10. SIGNIFICANCE

- 10.1. This is not a significant decision according to the Council's Policy on Significance and Engagement.

Phillip Hindrup

MANAGER TRANSPORT SERVICES

ANNEXES

There are no attachments for this report.