



DRIVING DOWN

EMISSIONS

WITH

PUBLIC TRANSPORT


Sinn Féin

OCTOBER 2022

Introduction

The transport sector accounted for 17.7% of our GHG emissions in 2021, and this must fall by 50% over the next eight years from the 2018 baseline, if we are to meet our overall emission reduction target of 51% by 2030.

About half of all transport emissions originate from the passenger car fleet, highlighting the urgent need to invest in public transport to give people affordable alternatives and help achieve a significant modal shift to more sustainable transport options.

Sinn Féin want to see a sustainable all-island transport system that enables the movement of people and goods locally, regionally and nationally at the least environmental, social, and financial cost.

We want people of all ages and abilities to have access to green, affordable, accessible, safe and reliable public transport options.

Our island's public transport system is staffed by tens of thousands of hard-working men and women, whose commitment ensures almost 300 million sustainable journeys can be made on buses, trams and trains each year. We want to build on this.

To help achieve this [Sinn Féin's 2023 Alternative Budget](#) proposes to inject an additional €195m million into our public transport system next year, cutting fares, investing in new rail infrastructure, accelerating the rollout of rural bus services and making public transport safer and more accessible.

Our progressive proposals show that we can cut emissions while delivering social and economic benefits for citizens at the same time.



Permanent 20% public transport fare reduction & expand to private bus operators

+€120,000,000

To encourage more people to use public transport, Sinn Féin are proposing to invest €96m next year to make the 20% fare reduction for commuters on buses, trams and trains permanent.

This initiative would reduce the cost of transport for workers and families and encourage the use of this environmentally friendly mode of transport.

Furthermore, at an additional cost of €24m, we would extend this 20% fare reduction to commercial bus operators, who are currently excluded from the scheme.

These bus services contribute significantly to our public transport system, accounting for 30,520,000 trips in 2019.

This extension will particularly benefit commuters outside of Dublin, where private operators deliver important connectivity, in areas the state failed to invest in.



Cut public transport fares by 50% for U18s

+€11,140,000

To further ease the cost-of-living pressures that families are now facing, and to increase the use of public transport by families and young people, we would eliminate fares on public transport for under 18s over a two-year period.

€11,140,000 would deliver an additional 30% reduction, on top of the 20% reduction outlined above, providing a 50% reduction for under 18s next year.

Free public transport is already a reality for over one million people across the state. The Free Travel Scheme here was introduced in 1967 with the aim of promoting social inclusion and preventing the isolation of elderly and people with disabilities.

We believe creating a free public transport system for under 18s will further help increase its use and promote positive habit formation from a young age.

Staggering this introduction over two-years will also allow the NTA to assess the increase in demand, which can then be addressed through fleet expansion funding.

Accelerate the rollout of rural bus services

+€25,000,000

For those living in rural Ireland accessing services, employment, education and retail is difficult if not impossible, without using a private car.

The Connecting Ireland plan aims to change this by providing 70% of the population outside of cities, with a bus service that provides at least three return trips each weekday to a nearby town.

Given the urgency of the climate crisis and the lack of public transport alternatives in rural Ireland, we believe this important plan should be accelerated.

We want to deliver this plan in a quicker timeframe than is currently planned, to ensure those living in rural communities have the choice of leaving their car at home and using public transport.

Therefore in 2023, we would provide €25m for this plan, half of the remaining funding required to deliver its rollout.

Extend short hop fares to more train stations

+€2,000,000

The Short Hop Zone for train commuters has reduced the price of travel for many workers, however, some train stations on the periphery of the current Short Hop Zones are excluded.

This results in higher costs for people living in these areas and often results in commuters having to drive a portion of the way in order to catch a train from a more affordable location.

This is particularly environmentally damaging as vehicles tend to emit more pollution during the first few kilometres of journey when their engines are warming up.

Therefore in 2023, we would allocate €2m for the NTA to extend the current Short Hop Zone to more stations, providing affordable train journeys for commuters.



- **Sinn Féin spokesperson on Transport & Meath East TD Darren O'Rourke at Gormanston train station, one of the stations excluded from the Short Hop Zones**

Kickstart new rail infrastructure

+€23,000,000

Sinn Féin is committed to delivering two major public transport capital transport projects, beyond what has been pre-committed and funded through the NDP; the Navan Rail Line and the Western Rail Corridor.

When complete, these projects combined could provide for an additional 2,375,000 sustainable passenger journeys each year.

In 2023 we would allocate €23m in capital funding to kickstart these two important public transport infrastructure projects, which can deliver significant benefits for the regions and our environment.

The Western Rail Corridor has the potential to re-vitalise western communities, provide alternative transport options for people and deliver much needed regional connectivity. It has been estimated if the line is reactivated 575,000 passengers could travel on it each year by 2030.

Re-establishing the rail connection to Navan can benefit commuters, businesses, tourism and the environment, ending the commuting nightmare for many and take thousands of cars off our road each day. It has been estimated this line has the potential to facilitate up to 1.8 million passenger journeys per year and further links to the north-west.



• Sinn Féin President Mary Lou McDonald TD with Meath TDs Johnny Guirke & Darren O'Rourke at Navan rail station

Make public transport more accessible for people with disabilities

+€12,600,000

The 2016 census recorded 13.5% of the population here as having a disability.

In 2023 we would increase the Public Transport Accessibility Retrofit Programme by €12,600,000, bringing the total annual funding to €27.95m.

We welcome the fact that all new train carriages will be equipped with automatic retractable steps, but significant investment is still required to ensure we have wheelchair accessible access at all train stations, platforms and bus stops.

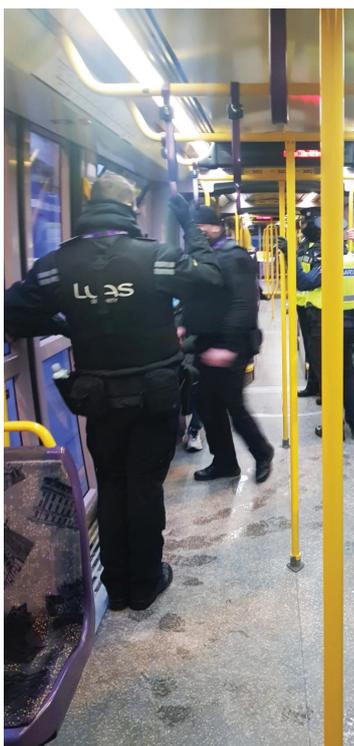


In 2023 we would increase the Public Transport Accessibility Retrofit Programme by €12,600,000.

We would maintain this level of funding over a 5-year term in government, providing enough funding to finance all the works needed to ensure our public transport system is accessible for all.

Make public transport safer with a dedicated public transport policing unit

+€2,500,000



Key to getting more people using sustainable public transport, more often, is to make it safer for commuters and tourists.

Assaults, abusive language, ant-social behaviour, drug dealing, and intimidation can be commonplace on buses, trams and trains, and this needs to be addressed to ensure people feel safe using public transport.

The Travelling in a Woman's Shoes report found that just 15% of women in Dublin felt safe using trains, with only 24% feeling safe using a bus in the capital.

Outside of Dublin, only 23% of women felt safe using the train, while just 19% felt safe using bus services.

The report found that "without a better understanding of women's needs, we will struggle to achieve modal shift."

Sinn Féin support establishing a dedicated transport policing unit and in 2023 we would allocate €2,500,000 for this.

We believe investing in a transport policing unit will help make public transport safer and encourage more people to use it, thereby increasing passenger numbers and decreasing carbon emissions.



Investment in the School Transport Scheme

+€10,550,000

The School Transport Scheme is an essential service, catering for 121,400 children daily.

But each year the scheme is over-subscribed, with the state turning thousands of children away from this public transport option. This is totally at odds with our climate ambitions, and results in thousands of extra private car journeys to and from school each day.

The government are failing to harness the unprecedented demand for this service.

This year Bus Éireann said they had an unprecedented number of applications (due to Government's decision to waive fees without a proper plan in place), but without additional investment this will result in a significant number of refusals.

In 2023, we would provide €3.3m which would add 10,000 extra places from September next year (full-year cost €10m) and begin to phase out fees on the scheme at an initial cost of €2.25m (full-year cost €6.75m).

We would also allocate €5m for the purchase of new school buses, noting the age and resulting emissions from the older models.

Increasing the number of school bus places to over 131,000 is equivalent to replacing 40,000 private car journeys daily, which will help to reduce our road emissions.

- €3.3m for 10,000 new places
- €5m for the purchase of new school buses
- €2.25m to phase put School Transport Scheme fees

DRIVING DOWN EMISSIONS WITH PUBLIC TRANSPORT

www.sinnfein.ie



**Darren
O'Rourke TD**

Sinn Féin spokesperson
on Climate Action and Transport
✉ darren.orourke@oireachtas.ie



**SENATOR
Lynn Boylan**

Sinn Féin spokesperson on
Climate Justice
✉ lynn.boylan@oireachtas.ie