

WEEKDAY CHALLENGE FOR BUSINESSES

WEEKDAY CHALLENGE PUBLIC TRANSPORT MONTH

Introduction

At a time of rising fuel costs, congestion and pressure on household budgets, there is a real opportunity to position public transport as a **cost effective, positive, alternative for everyday travel**.

We have developed a campaign that showcases the benefits of public transport. Through rewards, a workplace challenge, friendly competition and storytelling people will be encouraged to give public transport a go.

Public Transport Month will be Waikato wide, featuring and encouraging the use of the Waikato commuter transit services focussing on the daily commute.

The pilot year, 2026, is designed to build partnerships, engagement and momentum, creating a foundation for a more coordinated, collaborative approach to increasing public transport use in future years.

The campaign is powered by the **Weekday Challenge**, a programme already successfully operating in Hamilton, with the support of Hamilton City Council.

Potential economic return

Public transport services in the Waikato region carry **hundreds of thousands of passenger journeys each month** across the Busit network and commuter services.

A minimal **1% increase in ridership during September** would therefore represent approximately 12,000–15,000 additional trips in that month.

Using a conservative average fare of approximately \$2.50–\$3.00 per journey, this would generate approximately **\$33,000–\$41,000** in additional fare revenue in September alone, effectively covering the cost of a regional campaign contribution.



Because commuter travel habits tend to be repeated, even small increases in trial use can translate into ongoing public transport use beyond the campaign period.

As the campaign is repeated annually and collaborations grow, the effect has the potential to compound over time and add significant value to a network that has substantial capacity for increased utilisation.



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Powered by the Weekday Challenge

The Weekday Challenge is a behaviour-change programme designed to encourage more sustainable commuting and everyday travel.

Over the past five years the programme has been delivered in partnership with councils and community organisations across New Zealand.

During that time:

- **Over two million journeys** have been logged through the platform
- the programme has worked with **over 200 businesses and 125 schools**

The Weekday (businesses) and Wednesday Challenge (schools) programmes combine community engagement with a digital platform that allows participants to log journeys and provides real-time data on participation, travel behaviour and emissions impacts.

How the Public Transport Month campaign will run

- The campaign runs through September, 2026
- Participants log public transport journeys on the Weekday Challenge app
- The app records data visible for you to track mode shift on the campaign
- We promote the Waikato Region transport options throughout the month via PR, digital advertising, social media
- We engage a local business ambassador to engage with businesses and encourage participation
- We open up The Weekday Challenge to all businesses and participants across the Waikato Region
- We connect directly with all participants taking part throughout the campaign with weekly email updates



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Collaboration and partnership development

A key objective of the pilot will be to develop a collaborative network of organisations that can support public transport promotion and behaviour change over time. Additionally we will actively collaborate with the Busit team to enhance the profiling and public awareness of new routes, feature services and promotions.

The Collaborative ecosystem we will build across your region includes:

- NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi
- Sustainable Business Network
- Hamilton Chamber of Commerce
- Waikato University and tertiary institutions
- Major employers and business hubs
- Business Associations
- KidsCan – for 2027 inclusion



Evaluation and reporting

The September 2026 pilot month will culminate in a **post-campaign report**, including:

- Analysis of ridership impacts during the campaign period
- Journey data captured through the Weekday Challenge platform
- Participation levels across workplaces and organisations
- Lessons learned and opportunities for improvement.

This will provide your council with clear evidence on the effectiveness of the approach and whether a more comprehensive programme should be considered in future years.

Investment

The cost to Waikato Regional Council to run this campaign in September 2026 is **\$30,000 + GST**. Plus **\$5,000** of Public Transport rewards. (Nature of which to be discussed)

