



MOUNT BARKER
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Public Transport Action Plan

Endorsed by Council 8th October 2024



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Introduction

Council is already advocating for high quality, frequent and rapid public transport to/from Adelaide and improved local bus services. Some of these bus service upgrades are being implemented by the State Government in 2024. However, resolving public transport needs for the Mount Barker district is critical to managing transport demand between Mount Barker and other regional centres. The key public transport issue for Mount Barker residents, workers and visitors is the lack of adequate public transport options for many within our community and traffic capacity issues on the South Eastern Freeway.

We will continue to investigate options in collaboration with the State Government to fund and provide the best answer for our community including passenger rail and other innovative public transport services, such as on-demand transport.

Council has endorsed the **Transport Lead Strategy** which establishes the overarching principles for transport planning and traffic management throughout the Mount Barker District in the coming years.

Six core themes are outlined in the Lead Strategy namely:

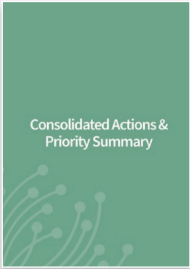
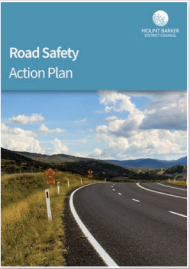
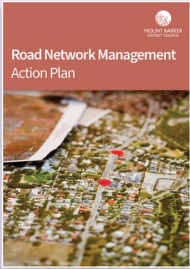
- Road Network Management
- Active Transport
- Road Safety
- Parking
- **Public Transport** and
- Technology and Innovation

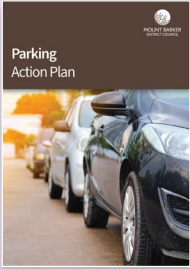
The combined suite of these six themes, together with the Lead Strategy and a consolidated action plan, make up the complete Integrated Transport Plan.



Transport Lead Strategy
Endorsed by Council
5 September 2022

This document details Council's commitment to **Public Transport**.





Summary Actions & Implementation Plan

Timings
Estimated costs
Criticality/priority

To be determined following community engagement

Vision and Strategic Directions

Council has a vision to support and advocate for expanded public transport infrastructure and services to all parts of the district and for a fast and efficient public transport service to Adelaide.

The overall status of public transport must be raised to be viable and the first choice travel option.

The key directions for **Public Transport** are:

- Council to work with the State Government to provide our community with a frequent, fast, and reliable public transport network that meets the diverse needs of users throughout the district.
- Reviewing the location of additional park-n-ride facilities to support improved public transport services.
- Public transport hubs are connected to communities through best practice pedestrian design and a cohesive, attractive bicycle network.
- Development and delivery of a sustainable community transport system which provides affordable and accessible transport solutions responsive to people's individual physical, social, health, financial and support circumstances.
- Establishment and expansion of the on-demand public transport services (Keoride).
- Integration of taxis, ride share and other private transport operations into network planning.
- Community transport with the provision of community bus services.

What we heard so far

Council held stakeholder meetings in March 2024 and the key issues and ideas are provided as follows:

Bus services

- Redesign the local bus network in Mount Barker
- Improve bus service frequencies and hours for bus routes
- Improve the bus service reliability on the South Eastern Freeway and Glen Osmond Road
- Provide bus services to the townships
- Consider the expansion of the community bus services
- Consider a free local bus to manage parking demand
- Manage the school bus service contracts more efficiently

Infrastructure

- Update the access to and quality of bus stops
- Address the bus depot capacity and location
- Review the bus interchange locations and Park and Ride and consider other locations in the southern part of Mount Barker
- Implement bus lanes on Adelaide Road
- Plan for Mount Barker as a public transport hub
- Plan subdivisions with roads designed for buses

Vision and Strategic Directions Continued

On-demand transport

- Confirm Keoride funding from the State Government
- Expand the Keoride service area to include Hahndorf (and other town centres) and extend the services hours
- Improve the Keoride operations and reliability with increased buses in the Keoride fleet

Public transport benefits

- Car culture and environmental benefits of public transport
- Public transport needs to be convenient, comfortable, safe and reliable

Railway or mass transit

- Plan for mass transit between Adelaide and Mount Barker
- Investigate options for a passenger railway to Mount Barker



Future fleet

- Consider autonomous vehicles
- Electric buses are not a priority

Customer focus

- Review the need for more accessible transport for the aging population
- Promote car pooling and ride share programs
- Provide simpler public transport information
- Review the needs for young age groups to have access to transport for employment



Existing Situation

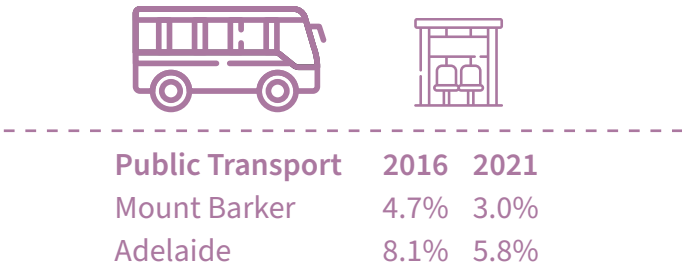
Public transport for the Mount Barker district includes the bus services for commuters to Adelaide, local trips and schools within and outside of Mount Barker. In January 2024, the interpeak and Sunday services between Mount Barker and Adelaide were upgraded. Peak period service improvements are to be implemented later in 2024.

Only 4.7 and 3.4 per cent of the residents of Mount Barker use public transport for work trips compared with those in Greater Adelaide at 8.1 and 5.8 per cent based on the 2016 and 2021 census statistics respectively. The 2021 census was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic significantly with many working from home than compared to 2016.

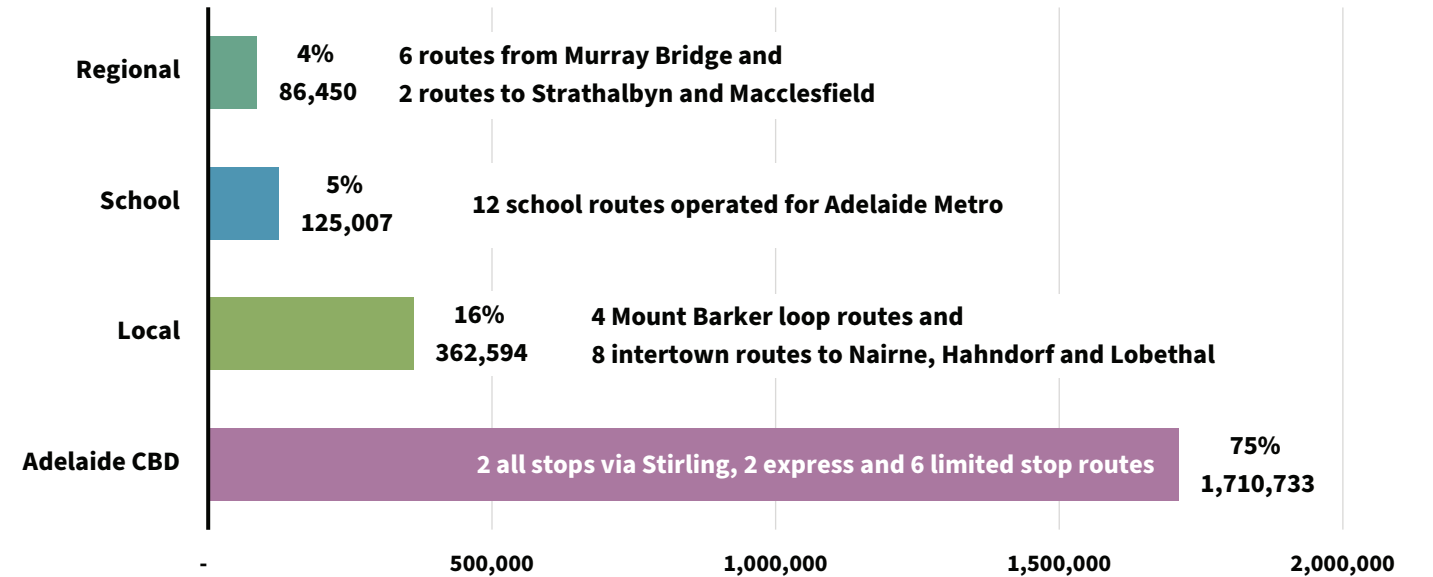
The existing public transport network in Mount Barker is provided only by bus with a mix of all-stops, limited and express buses from the two Park and Ride facilities in Dumas Street and Dutton Road, Mount Barker. Mount Barker has a total of 41 bus routes with 10 routes operating to Adelaide CBD via the South Eastern Freeway. The eight regional bus routes extend to Strathalbyn, Macclesfield and Murray Bridge.

Public Transport Mode Share Comparison

Source: ABS Census statistics, 2016 and 2021



Number of Services - KM per Year for Routes in Mount Barker



Source: Adelaide Metro, December 2023

Existing Situation Continued

Since January 2020, the KeoRide on-demand transport service has operated as a trial funded by the State Government to provide an alternative local transport option within the Mount Barker urban area, Nairne and Littlehampton. The buses do not follow a fixed route and therefore they provide a wider service coverage within the designated service areas. Customers use a phone app to book a service with five small wheelchair accessible buses that operate to cater for customer demand. The KeoRide services are operated by the same company that has the Hills bus contract and operate Monday to Friday from 6am to 9pm and Saturdays, Sundays and most public holidays from 9 am to 7 pm.

In 2023, the fares were integrated with the Adelaide Metro bus fares with payments by Metrocard, credit or debit card using validator on board which resulted in an increase in patronage. Number of passengers since start of operations in 2020 is nearly 400,000 completed trips.

The bus network in the Hills contract area in the Mount Barker, Hahndorf, Littlehampton and Nairne with the on-demand transport service area is shown with the number of daily bus services at each bus stop on the following map. The two existing Park and Ride facilities in Mount Barker are in Dutton Road and Dumas Street.

The frequency of the AM peak hour bus services at the bus stops the Mount Barker, Littlehampton, Nairne and Hahndorf areas with the Keoride on-demand transport service area are shown on the bus network map. The two Park n Ride facilities in Dumas Street and Dutton Road are bus interchanges for the network where all of the Adelaide Metro and regional bus routes meet.

Average monthly patronage is 7,900 with the average weekly patronage of 1,975.

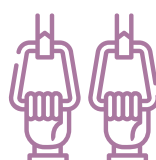


Average trips per day is 278 with an average wait time of 19.5 minutes.

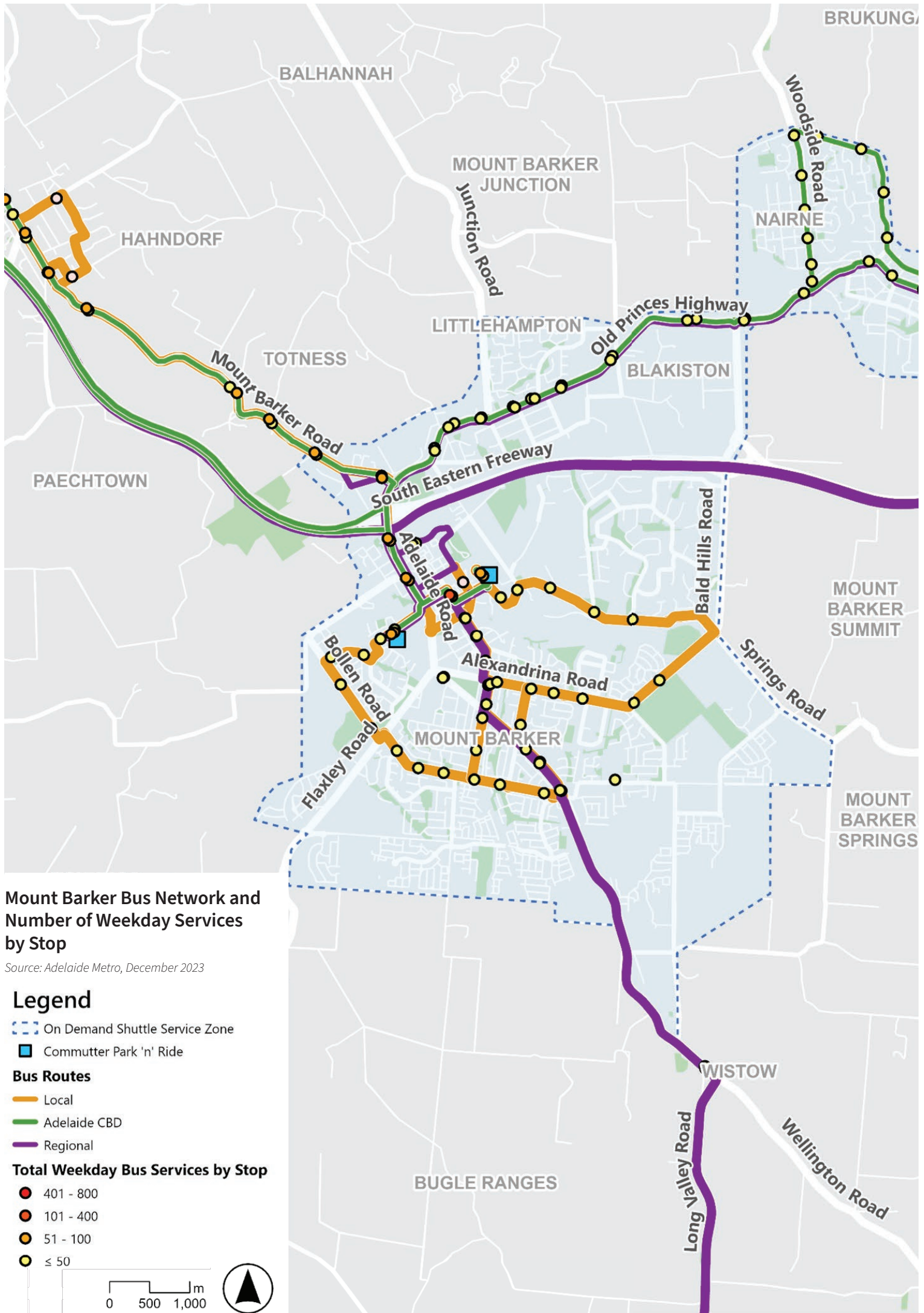
Average trip time is from 15 to 21 minutes and the average ride distance is 7.4kms



Average walking distance is about 108m



For the KeoRide On Demand services, more than 90% of trips have 2 or more passengers, 52% have 3 or more passengers at any one time



Bus Patronage Comparison from Ticket Validations

The bus patronage in Mount Barker was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic from April 2020 to late 2022 with about a 35% decrease in annual boardings from 2020 to 2022. The bus patronage recovered to 86% of the 2019 patronage level from 1.1 million to 960,000 annual fare validations in 2023. The proportion of bus services and patronage to Mount Barker is about 5% of the Adelaide Metro bus contracts. It was similarly affected by the pandemic to other metropolitan Adelaide areas.

Rail Infrastructure

Mount Barker has a discontinued railway line which provides a long-term opportunity for train services in the future. The State Government has conducted several feasibility studies for train services to Mount Barker since 2021, with additional planning and business case studies required. In addition to the bus services planned, funded and managed by the State Government and operated by a private bus company, taxi, Uber and community transport services are available.

In 2021, the local community voiced public support for passenger train services to Mount Barker at transport forums held in Mount Barker. As a result of these public forums, several passenger rail infrastructure options were under investigation by Infrastructure SA. Any rail option to Mount Barker has many challenges operating through the Adelaide Hills with significant infrastructure costs and the need to share the line with the freight trains and interstate passenger train services such as The Overland. Nonetheless, passenger rail services to Mount Barker are an option for further serious consideration in developing an action plan to support the long-term population growth in Mount Barker.

Bus Stop and Park and Ride Facilities

The total number of bus stops within the Council area is 144 with 95 stops (66%) in the urban area that is defined by the on-demand transport area that includes Mount Barker, Nairne, Littlehampton and Totness. A total of 49 bus stops are in the townships, including Hahndorf, Echunga and Meadows and along the rural roads.

The public transport infrastructure in Mount Barker includes:

- The Park and Ride facilities at Dutton Road and Dumas Street in Mount Barker with a total capacity for 580 commuter cars and 40 bicycle parking.
- A total of 144 bus stops on the fixed route bus services are installed and maintained by Council, except at the two bus interchanges.
- Bus shelters are installed and maintained by Council or the State Government at the bus interchanges at Dutton Road and Dumas Street.



Bus Network Performance

Patronage

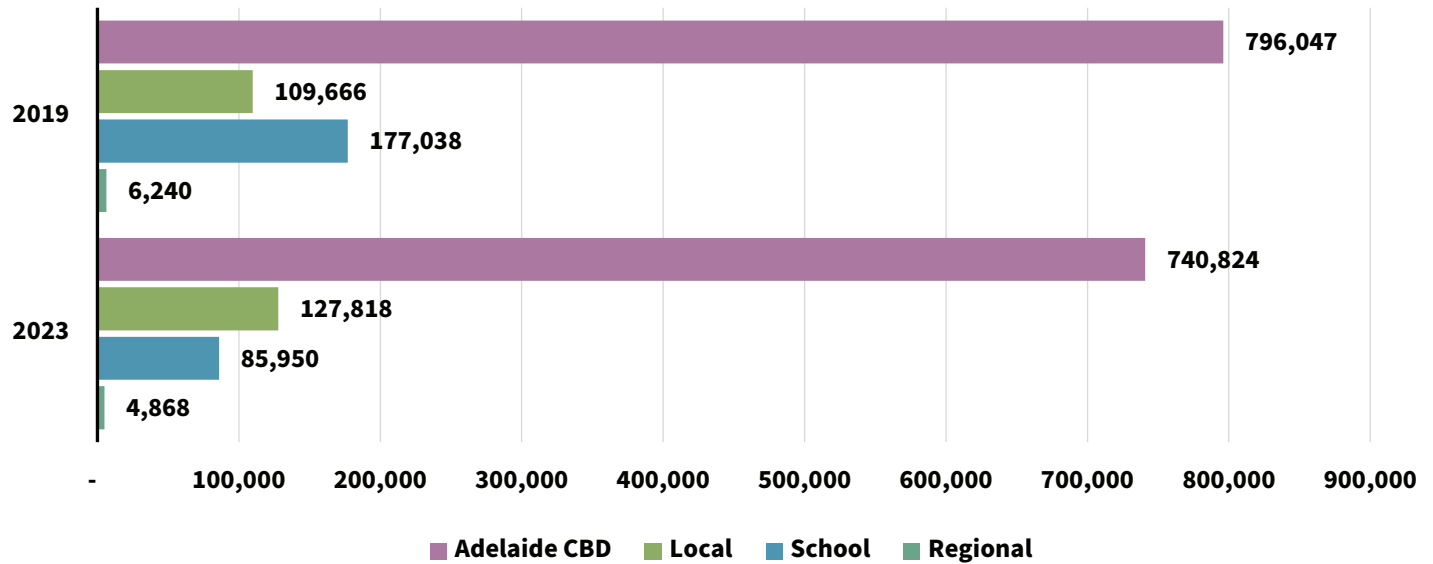
Bus patronage in the Mount Barker urban area, including Nairne and Littlehampton, is estimated with the number of fare validations approximately 450,000 in 2023. This is 86% of the total boardings in the Mount Barker district area with 14% in the townships of Hahndorf, Meadows, Echunga and Macclesfield. This is lower than in 2019 before the COVID-19 pandemic that affected bus patronage from April 2020 and changed the travel patterns for commuters with many Adelaide CBD workers working from home with fewer trips into Adelaide.

The three busiest bus stops in Mount Barker, that have 60% of the boardings in 2023, are located at:

- City-bound bus stop at the Dumas Street Park n Ride with over 92,000 annual fare validations.
- City-bound bus stop at the Dutton Road Park n Ride with over 57,000 annual fare validations.
- Stop 64 in Hutchinson Street in the city centre north of Gawler Street.

The next three busiest stops that had a total of about 33,000 fare validations are located at Stops 54A and 55 on Mount Barker Road, Hahndorf and at Zone B at the Dutton Road Park n Ride.

Total Annual Fare Validations



Bus Network Performance Continued

Bus route performance results

From the 2023 fare validation data provided by the South Australia Public Transport Authority, a total of 1.25 million boardings were on the Adelaide Metro bus services that includes all routes to Adelaide CBD, the local town loop and township routes and the regional routes, except for the Murray Bridge service, and school bus services. The statistics show that the bus routes to Adelaide CBD and the school bus services had the highest boardings per bus service trips. The Mount Barker loop routes, the local township routes between Lobethal and Aldgate and Nairne and Mount Barker, along with the regional bus routes to Strathalbyn and Macclesfield had the lowest patronage per trip.

Based on a bus route performance review of the Adelaide Metro regular bus routes that service Mount Barker, the Adelaide CBD corridor with express and limited stop services have the highest patronage per hour. The busiest all-stops route is Route 864 and 864F that operates between Mount Barker and Adelaide via Hahndorf, Aldgate and Stirling.

Very Good with express and limited stop Routes 840X Mount Barker to City and T843 Mount Barker to City

Good with Routes 864, 864F and 860F from Mount Barker to City, 830F Lobethal to City, 841F and 842X Nairne to City

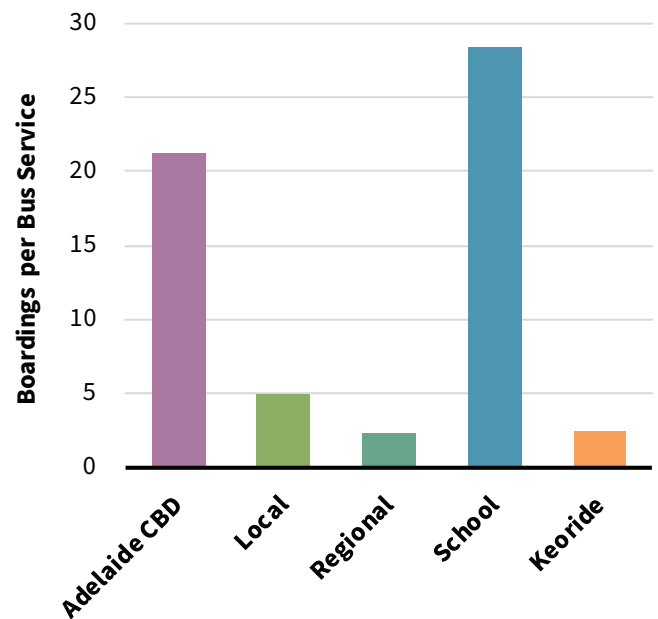
Below Average with Routes 835 Lobethal to Mount Barker, 837 Nairne to Mount Barker, 839 and 838H Mount Barker Loop services, 834A Lobethal to Verdun, 835A Lobethal to Mount Barker and the limited stop Routes T840 Mount Barker to City and T842 Nairne to City

Poor with Routes 834 Verdun to Lobethal, 838 Mount Barker Loop and 850 Macclesfield to Aldgate

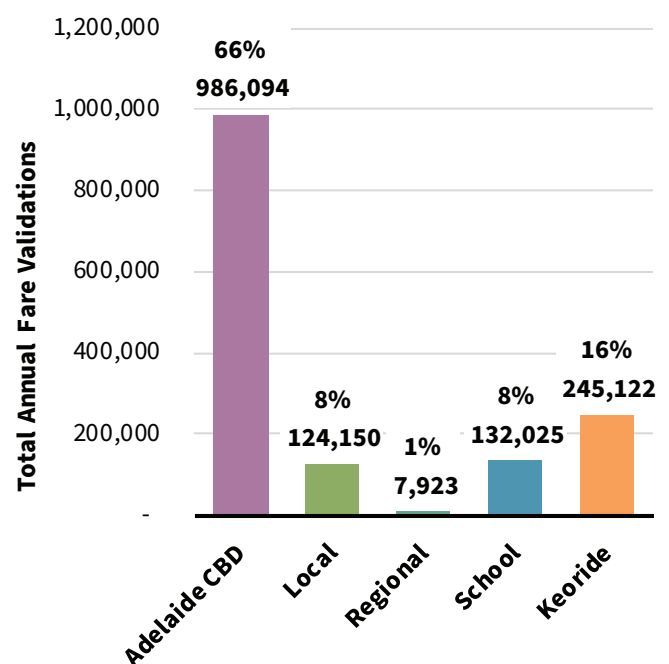
Very Poor with Routes 852 Strathalbyn to Mount Barker and 839R Mount Barker West Clockwise Loop service and HL1 and HL2 Mount Barker – Hahndorf (Fridays only)

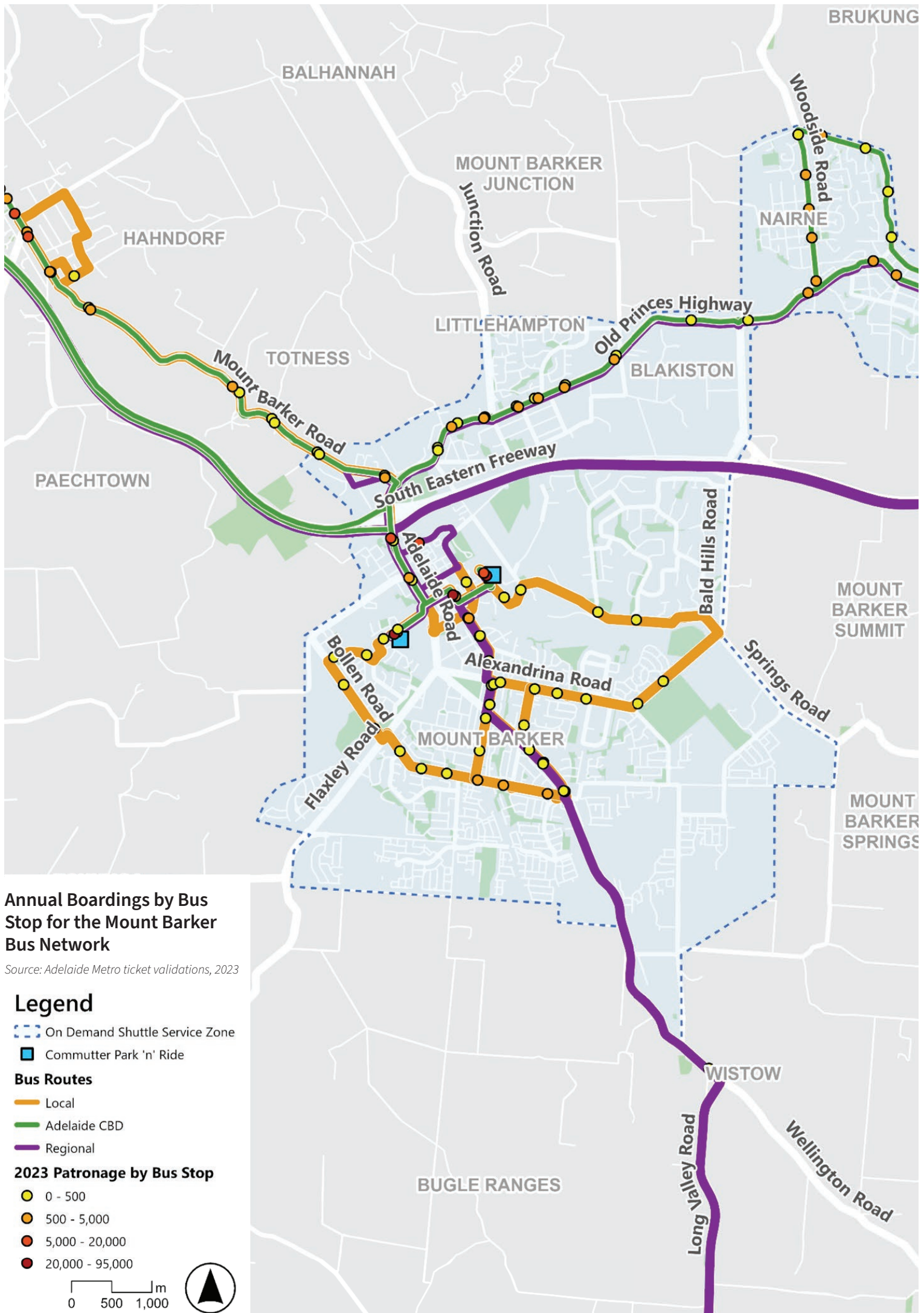
The map on the next page shows the level of annual boardings by bus stop.

**Boardings per Bus Service Trip in
2023**



Boadings by Route Type in 2023





Key Issues for Public Transport

The key public transport issue for Mount Barker district residents, workers and visitors is the lack of adequate public transport options for many within our community and traffic capacity issues on the South Eastern Freeway. Key issues are provided under these headings:

Contractual and operations

- Keoride on-demand transport service in Mount Barker, Nairne and Littlehampton is a trial with no secure funding.
- Keoride currently operates with a many-to-many pick-up and drop-off model that cannot manage the higher demand. Alternative operational models with a many-to-one hub mode may be more efficient.
- Keoride only stops at existing bus stops, but Council could provide additional bus zones that could be shared with a loading zone in Mount Barker city centre.
- School bus services are provided by the Department for Education and Adelaide Metro with different funding services and contractual arrangements. This is inefficient and is not best practice.



Route coverage and service frequencies

- Keoride service area is limited to Mount Barker township, Nairne and Littlehampton.
- Hahndorf residents have requested that the on-demand transport service area be extended to include Hahndorf instead of operating Routes HL1 and HL2 to Mount Barker.
- Customers on Keoride services have requested more regular bus services between Adelaide CBD and Littlehampton.
- Mount Barker bus network does not provide adequate services for an urban area with high population growth.
- Several townships in Mount Barker District Council have very limited or no public transport services, such as to Echunga, Callington and Meadows. Echunga and Meadows have Route 850.
- The connection between Strathalbyn and Mount Barker is provided by Route 852 with limited weekday services. Callington has Route 808 provided by LinkSA in the regional bus network.
- Routes 808, 850 and 852 have regional fares that apply because these bus services extend beyond the Adelaide Metro contract area.

Key Issues for Public Transport Continued

Planning for future public transport infrastructure

- Existing Keolis Downer bus depot at Dutton Road is at capacity with no space for expansion to accommodate an increased bus fleet.
- The Mount Barker Park and Ride sites in the town centre are not located for efficient bus operations and do not service the southern parts of Mount Barker.
- Traffic congestion on the South Eastern Freeway and on Glen Osmond Road affects bus service reliability and travel times to Adelaide CBD.
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) options were developed but are not publicly available for discussion and comment.
- Feasibility studies for a train service between Mount Barker and Adelaide were conducted in 2022, but the long-term planning is inconclusive. Future planning is required.
- Council can provide planning advice into the location of future railway stations by considering the walking and cycling networks connecting to each station.

Customer engagement

- The outcomes from customer satisfaction and needs surveys are not monitored publicly. South Australian Public Transport Authority (SAPTA) conducts passenger satisfaction surveys that are not disclosed to the public.
- Adelaide Metro does not adequately promote the bus services for trips to Adelaide and for local trips.
- The Adelaide Metro bus route numbering and branding is confusing for new bus customers.
- The performance of the existing bus route and on-demand transport services is not provided for public information.

Other issues

- The taxi services are limited to trips to Adelaide and local trips. It is difficult for taxis to service the townships.
- Consider implementing ride share services and mobility as a service, with local deliveries from businesses to customers.
- Promote tourism trips to Mount Barker and Hahndorf with coaches, chauffeur services (Uber) and cellar door links.
- Review the eligibility of community transport services operated by the Council.



Best Practice and Opportunities

Interstate regional cities

When Mount Barker is compared with other regional cities in Australia, the service hours and frequencies are a longer, operating seven days a week and covering most of the urban area. These regional cities are:

- Mildura, Victoria (population 33,000)
- Warrnambool, Victoria (population 36,000)
- Bunbury, Western Australia (population 47,000)
- Wagga Wagga, NSW (population 69,000).

In the other Australian States, the local bus routes are provided higher levels of funding. In NSW, the regional cities have minimum service levels that are required for the private bus operators. An example of the service guidelines is provided here.

The minimum service frequency for bus services in major regional centres in NSW are set as follows:

- Weekday (commuter peak): 30 minutes (primary corridor), 60 minutes (secondary route)
- Weekday (off-peak): 60 minutes (primary corridor), 120 minutes (secondary route)
- Saturday: 60 minutes (primary corridor), 120 minutes (secondary route)
- Sunday and Public Holidays: 120 minutes (primary corridor), targeted services (secondary route)

The service coverage guidelines for regional cities in NSW require 90% of households need to be within 400 m of a bus stop on weekdays from 6 am to 10 pm and Saturdays from 8 am to 6 pm. On Sundays, from 9 am to 6 pm, 90% of households need to be within 800 m of a bus stop.

On-demand transport services in NSW and Victoria have been implemented in regional towns and centres with different service models, such as a point-to-point service to connect townships to regional centres or flexible transport options which are a hybrid of the fixed route with an extended service area with pick-ups and drop-offs anywhere safe within a roam zone, such as in Toowoomba, Queensland.

Wagga Wagga, NSW

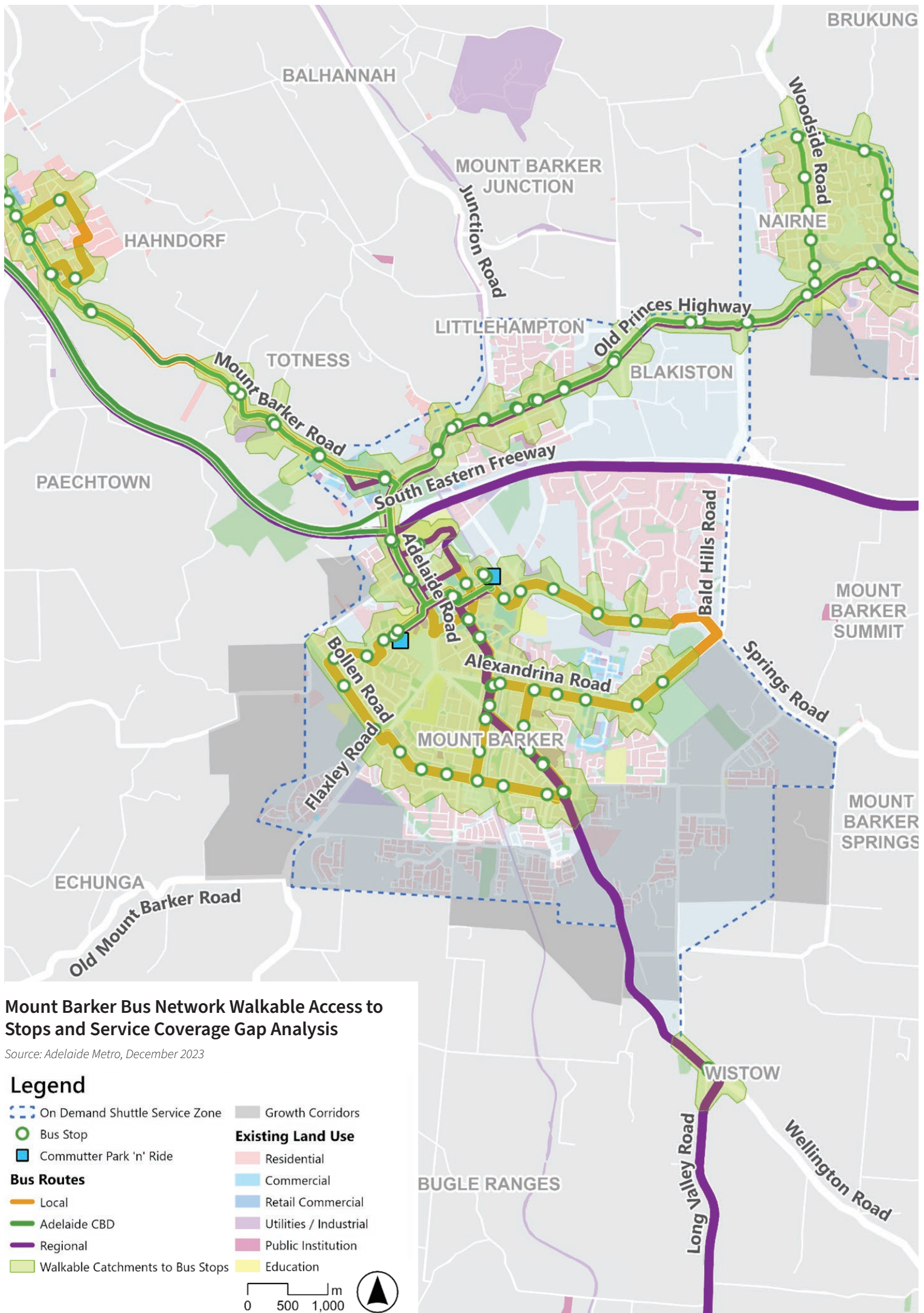
In March 2020 more than 240 extra weekly services were introduced across the Wagga Wagga bus network. The network was refined to improve timetabled connections and provide better bus coverage. A comprehensive network review of the bus services in Mount Barker has not be undertaken in recent years.

Warrnambool, Victoria

Located 250 km south-west of Melbourne, Warrnambool has eight local bus routes in the urban area with services to the Deakin University campus and Allansford and a rural route to Port Fairy. Most routes operate hourly services from 7 am to 7 pm on weekdays, 7 am to 6 pm on Saturdays and 8 am to 6 pm on Sundays.

V/Line operates trains to Melbourne with five return train services on weekdays and three return train services on weekends.

Public Transport Victoria determines the routes, services and contracts under the brand of Transit South West with Warrnambool Bus Lines as the local bus operator.

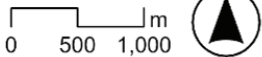


Mount Barker Bus Network Walkable Access to Stops and Service Coverage Gap Analysis

Source: Adelaide Metro, December 2023

Legend

- On Demand Shuttle Service Zone
- Bus Stop
- Commuter Park 'n' Ride
- Bus Routes**
 - Local
 - Adelaide CBD
 - Regional
 - Walkable Catchments to Bus Stops
- Existing Land Use**
 - Residential
 - Commercial
 - Retail Commercial
 - Utilities / Industrial
 - Public Institution
 - Education
- Growth Corridors



Opportunities

Mount Barker has the following opportunities to improve the infrastructure and services for public transport:

- Park n Ride facilities
 - Identify locations for future Park and Ride facilities that be includes in the Transport Infrastructure Deed.
 - Liaise with the State Government for other locations considered in the DIT Hills Transport Study.
 - Identify locations for Rail Park n Ride facilities as part of a rail corridor planning study.
 - Identify future roads for bus routes when Heysen Boulevard is fully connected.
 - Opportunities for shared parking use t sporting ground car parks with shuttle bus services to the town centres for shopping and business trips to minimise the demand for town centre car parking.
- Bus services and frequency
 - Connections to employment centres
 - Advocacy for streamlining/single pricing scheme with a fare structure that encourages off-peak patronage
 - Support for events e.g. SANFLW game at SSRP
- Bus Route options
 - Advocate for interim services, such as:
 - New local routes to service the disconnected Heysen Boulevard
 - A school loop between Bollen – Hawthorn – Flaxley Roads and Paech – Hartman – Heysen Roads

In the 2019 Adelaide Hills regional public transport study (RDA, 2019) and the 2021 Adelaide Hills-Mount Barker Corridor Study (DIT, 2022), a new Park n Ride facility was proposed to be investigated at Verdun which would cater for commuters to Adelaide CBD from Hahndorf and surrounding rural localities that do not have frequent, local bus services.

Future residential development areas are not serviced by public transport adequately as shown on the map on the overleaf page where the pink residential land use is not covered by the light green walkable catchment areas to bus stops. An estimated future growth population of xxx residents is estimated to be beyond a 400 m walk to a bus stop in the development areas of Mount Barker, Littlehampton and Nairne.

Action Plan

The Action plan for management of the Road Network is provided in the following table. The Prioritisation was determined following community engagement and was accurate at the time of Council endorsement. A Consolidated List of Actions has been prepared reflecting the prioritisation, and this separate document will be updated on an annual basis.

The following studies were reviewed in developing the Public Transport Action Plan that were cofunded and supported by Mount Barker District Council:

1. Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu Peninsula Regional Public Transport Study, Regional Development Australia - Adelaide Hills, Fleurieu and Kangaroo Island (RDA), May 2019
2. People Transport Solutions for the Adelaide Hills, RDA, September 2021.

Other planning studies for mass transit options to Mount Barker prepared by Infrastructure SA were also reviewed in developing this action plan.

Action	Proposed Initiative	Council's Role	Priority
Keoride			
PT-1	Advocate for Keoride to be a permanent service for Mount Barker because the existing service is still a "trial" with no secure future funding	Advocacy	Short Y1
PT-2	Advocate for additional Keoride bus fleet and drivers to accommodate the higher demand for local trips to Mount Barker town centre, schools and the Park and Ride facilities for connections with the express bus services to Adelaide	Advocacy	Short Y1
PT-3	Advocate for the Keoride service area to be expanded to include Hahndorf. This would allow Routes HL1 and HL2 with the Friday only service to Mount Barker to be discontinued	Advocacy	Short Y1
Improved Routes and Regional Town Services			
PT-4	Advocate for improved public transport services and associated infrastructure for the various townships in the district	Advocacy	Short Y1
PT-5	Council to conduct a comprehensive public transport network and services audit to provide an evidence-based report to SAPTA on the need for improved local bus routes	Facilitator	Short Y3
PT-6	Council to engage with the bus customers to develop further understanding on the needs and issues for public transport with the existing customers and the wider community	Facilitator	Short Y3
PT-7	Advocate to SAPTA for improved communications and engagement with the bus customers through sharing of comments and issues between the Council and SAPTA	Advocacy	Short Y1
PT-8	Council to liaise with SAPTA to monitor the patronage and service reliability performance of all bus services operated in the Hills and regional bus contracts and to prepare an annual report for service improvements or changes for the public to review and comment on through online and in-person meetings	Stakeholder	Ongoing

Action Plan Continued

Action	Proposed Initiative	Council's Role	Priority
PT-9	Advocate to SAPTA for a rebranding and renumbering of the Adelaide Metro bus routes to be simpler for the customers to understand. This includes the introduction of Bus Rapid Transit style services The bus stops and information for the express bus services between Adelaide and Mount Barker to be given a unique name and branding so that the bus services are easy for infrequent customers and tourists to find the bus stops in Adelaide CBD	Advocacy	Medium
Public Transport Infrastructure			
PT-10	Advocate for a future bus depot planning study to determine a suitable location for a new bus depot in Mount Barker with the capacity reached at the existing Dutton Road facility	Advocacy	Short Y3
PT-11	Conduct a Park n Ride site location planning and policy study that reviews the locations of the Dutton Road and Dumas Street Park and Ride facilities and investigates a wide range of alternative or additional sites within Mount Barker and Hahndorf	Stakeholder	Short Y3
PT-12	Review existing facilities at bus stops and program upgrade of all facilities including provision of real time information signage, shelters, disability access compliance, and footpath connectivity	Facilitator	Medium
Mass Rapid Transit Options			
PT-13	Council to liaise with DIT regarding the Bus Rapid Transit options developed in the Adelaide Hills Transport study	Stakeholder	Short Y1
PT-14	Advocate to DIT to conduct a rail corridor preservation planning study and plan to future proof and secure the land for a future rail corridor with station locations to Mount Barker	Advocacy	Short Y2
PT-15	Council to liaise with DIT on freeway corridor and Glen Osmond Road traffic improvements that would benefit the travel times and reliability for the Mount Barker bus routes	Advocacy	Medium
School Bus Route Services			
PT-16	Advocate to the State Government to review the funding options for school bus services from the Department of Education and SAPTA with the objective of an integrated school bus system	Advocacy	Short Y2
Public Transport Service Promotion			
PT-17	Review Council's existing information packs to new residents about public transport services when they move into the new developments in Mount Barker. This information should be coordinated with Adelaide Metro and Council information with support from the developer.	Facilitator	Short Y1

Council role definitions

- Provider** Council directly provides infrastructure including the construction of local roads, footpaths and trails.
- Facilitator** Council facilitates the provision of the required actions by others. e.g. provision of footpath to a bus stop.
- Stakeholder** Council provides information or assistance in the development of a project e.g. desirable active transport links for Adelaide Road interchange upgrade.
- Advocacy** Council advocates on behalf of the community for the actions that are required. e.g. public transport.

Contact

Mount Barker District Council

Local Government Centre
Mount Barker Homemaker Centre
6 Dutton Road, Mount Barker SA 5251

9am-5pm Monday-Friday
(excluding public holidays)

Postal

PO Box 54, Mount Barker SA 5251

Telephone

8391 7200

after hours:

8391 7200 (Matters of Urgency Only)

Email

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www.mountbarker.sa.gov.au



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DISTRICT COUNCIL