

Paris, le 16 février 2021

Requête directe du Parlement de Suède

Free of Charge Public Transport in Paris

1 - Public transport is said to have been made free of charge while car traffic has been regulated/limited, on environmental/airpollution grounds. For whom and on what conditions are public transport free of charge?

Since 2017, public transportation is no longer free of charge when pollution peaks in Paris because it is expensive for the transport unions. In fact, in 2017, the Île-de-France region triggered the implementation of the "anti-pollution" package in all zones, at a rate of €3.80 for the day with unlimited access to transportation. The purpose of this pass is to encourage people in the Ile-de-France region to leave their vehicles in the garage and to give priority to public transportation during each pollution episode. It is available at ticket machines and ticket offices. The cost of this measure is estimated at 500,000 euros per day.

Free public transportation has been introduced in Paris for all young Parisians under 18 years of age since 2020.

However, measures for free residential parking have been introduced in Paris: they concern residential parking only, within the user's usual residential parking zones. Similarly, the city of Paris can introduce free day passes for Vélib's.

Recently, public transportation has been free in cities other than Paris due to a pollution peak: for example, on November 10, 2020, due to the triggering by the Eurometropolis of Strasbourg of the reinforced action plan against air pollution, the City's bus and streetcar network was free, for all, all day long and without any particular conditions.

2 - Are there any special measures/initiatives regarding free public transport and COVID-19?

Since the beginning of the Covid 19 epidemic, a myriad of cities such as Toulouse, Montpellier, Bayonne, Bordeaux, Carcassonne, Charleville-Mézières, Diepp have officially made their transport networks free.

Also, healthcare personnel in the Ile-de-France region can travel at a lower cost. Several public and private initiatives are moving in this direction. For example, the AP-HP and Ile-de-France Mobilités (IDFM) have set up a network of 20 free bus lines serving major train stations and hospitals, reserved for caregivers. Likewise, the Uber platform has waived its commission and is offering 25% discount on each ride to healthcare personnel through the "Uber Medics" option.

Other more local initiatives have also been launched:

- Since January 2021, the Occitania Region and liO have been offering a personalized and free on-demand transport service: a shuttle is available to enable you to get to the vaccination center near your home. The conditions of use are multiple: to be over 75 years old, to be autonomous and not need the use of a special medical vehicle, to move outside a city or metropolis, and finally to have made an appointment to be vaccinated.
- Since January 29, 2021, to get to the vaccination center in your area, the TER trip is free on the Aléop network. This measure decided by the Pays de la Loire Region is in place until further notice and is subject to the following conditions: a proof of appointment or a medical prescription and an identity document. Free travel on the Aléop network (train, coach and boat) to Redon, La Rochelle, Alençon, Nogent-Le-Rotrou, Bressuire and Vitré. However, it does not concern freely organized coaches (Flixbus,...), Intercités or trains with obligatory reservation (TGV, INOUI, OUIGO).

3 - Have there been previous occasions where public transport has been free of charge in Paris?

Until 2017, it should be noted that during pollution peaks in the capital and its region, public transportation was free to encourage users to take it, causing a net loss of several million euros.

Le Stif, a trade union, tried to ask the Île-de-France region to make up for this shortfall but the region responded in the negative for lack of means. In fact it was necessary to find another solution to reduce this loss of income which is becoming too important for the Stif: on average in Ile de France, about twenty days of pollution peaks per year resulted in a loss of 80 million euros per year.

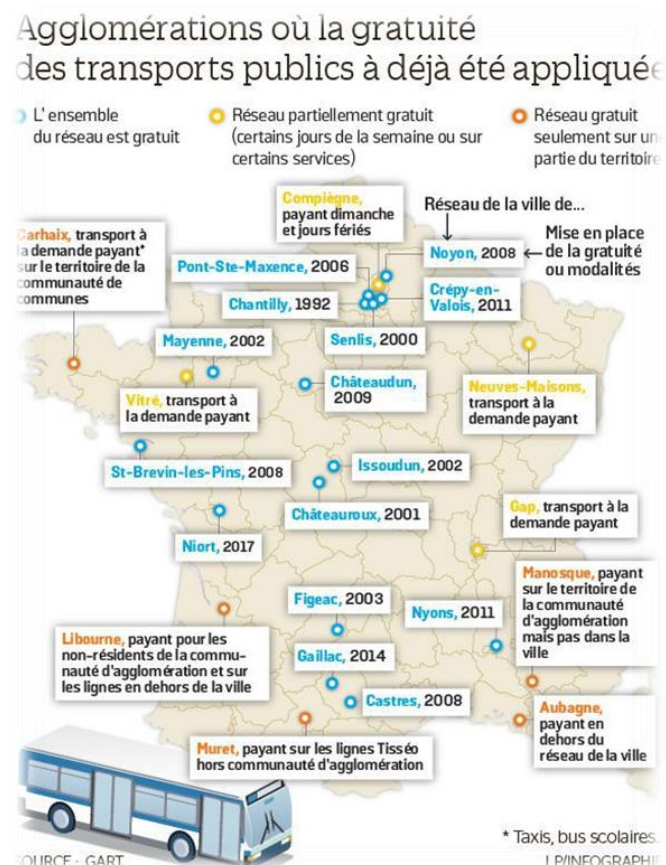
Since the start of the 2020-2021 school year, public transportation is free for all Parisians under the age of 18.

Public transportation is currently free in 29 cities in France. Among them, only three cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants : Dunkirk, Niort and Aubagne.

4 - How is/have this/these initiatives been financed?

Here are some examples of funding for free public transit incentives :

- In the Dunkirk metropolitan area, buses accounted for only 5% of journeys and the revenue from ticket sales was limited to €4.5 million per year. To compensate for the loss of this revenue, the urban community increased the transport payment (VT) from 1.05 to 1.55%.
- In Châteauroux in 2001, the switch to free travel was financed by extending the network from the town to the urban area, by a 0.05% increase in the VT (to 0.60%) and by savings of €100,000 on commercial and control functions.



- In the Valenciennes region, the transport union negotiated a discount on the RATP Dev concessionaire's contract to grant free access to under-18s (€1.5 million/year).

The sources of financing are thus multiple:

- Public subsidies such as in Grenoble for example (30%).
- A tax paid by companies called the "transport payment". In Niort, it amounts to 1.05% of the companies' payroll. The tax thus brings 15 million euros per year to the city, while the contract with Transdev amounts to 12 million euros in September 2017.
- In Dunkirk, as in Niort and Châteauroux, local taxes have not been increased. Patrice Vergriete, the mayor of Dunkirk, indicates that free transport and the accompanying improvement of the network will cost an additional 15 to 17 million euros per year. A sum that the metropolis found by cancelling the project to build an auditorium wanted by the previous mayor.

5 - Are there "car-free Sundays" once a month, when public transport is free of charge?

In France, there is no correlation between car-free Sundays and free public transportation: for the most part, transportation is not always free everywhere in France and car-free Sundays are not organized every month. Indeed, car-free Sunday has above all an environmental purpose, aimed at raising public awareness about air pollution.

Car-Free Day has existed in France since 1998. However, having fallen into disuse, this measure was revived by Anne Hidalgo by announcing a car-free day in Paris for Sunday, September 27, 2015. This initiative was renewed for a sixth time on September 27, 2020.

In concrete terms, it concerns the entire Parisian territory, excluding the Paris ring road. From 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., no motorized vehicles, including two-wheelers and electric vehicles, may circulate in Paris intramurals. Offenders are liable to a 4th class fine (€135 fine). In all "Paris Breathe" perimeters (including the central "Paris Breathe" sector) only buses, emergency vehicles and cabs is allowed to circulate, with a maximum speed limit of 20 km/h.

Parisians returning from the weekend will have to show proof of residence when entering the capital. The city specifies that "very advantageous fares" ranging from 30% to 40% of the normal fare are offered in many Parisian parking lots.

Also, for good reason, every first Sunday of the month, the center of the capital is reserved for pedestrians and soft traffic. This is an opportunity to take advantage of the « Paris Breathe » district, on a large central perimeter, on foot, by bike, rollerblades or scooter.

It should also be noted that when the level of pollution poses a risk to the health of the entire population or to the environment, the prefect can take restrictive emergency measures such as banning or limiting the use of vehicles.