

# Five years for Oldham town centre Metrolink line

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Metrolink's popular Oldham town centre line celebrates its fifth anniversary last weekend with an impressive track record.

Around 60,000 tram passenger journeys are being made to Oldham town centre every month, boosting access to jobs, shops, cafes and restaurants and local attractions including the traditional Tommyfield Market and popular Oldham Coliseum Theatre.

The new street-running tram line brought vital transport links to the heart of Oldham town centre when it opened on 27 January 2014.

Four new stops at Westwood, Oldham King Street, Oldham Central and Oldham Mumps replaced a 1.5 mile (2.4 km) section of the old railway line with fully accessible transport links.

Thanks to more frequent services, patronage on the Oldham-Rochdale Metrolink line is five times higher than the Oldham Loop Line rail service it replaced, with 6.1 million journeys in 2018 compared to 1.2 million in the last full year of rail operation.

And Metrolink's iconic trams have 'clocked-up' around 5.7 million kilometres between Manchester city centre and Oldham Mumps since the four stop extension to the town centre opened, with nearly 330,000 kilometres in the town centre alone.

The line has provided crucial transport links in areas with low car ownership. And a quarter of the people who use the Oldham line say they take it instead of using a car, helping to combat congestion and improve Greater Manchester's air quality.

The Oldham town centre line was completed as part of the 'big-bang' Metrolink expansion that extended the 93-stop network to Chorlton and East Didsbury, Rochdale town centre, East Manchester and Ashton-under-Lyne, Wythenshawe and Manchester Airport.

Councillor Mark Aldred is Chair of the Transport for Greater Manchester Committee which pioneered the Metrolink system and secured crucial funding for its expansion. He said: "Metrolink has been a tremendous boost for town centres across Greater Manchester and has become part of the very fabric of the communities it serves.

"By offering rapid, frequent transport links to the heart of Oldham, it's helping residents, commuters and visitors get to jobs, leisure and essential facilities both locally and right across Greater Manchester.

"We are rightly proud of the success story that is Metrolink and I've no doubt that the new zonal ticketing system will encourage even more people to travel to Oldham town centre and enjoy everything it has to offer.

"While it's great to pause and reflect on this milestone, it's also vital that we look ahead, which is why we're looking at closely at Oldham's transport needs for the future, as set out in our Transport Delivery Plan."

Councillor Sean Fielding, Leader of Oldham Council, said: "The Metrolink is an invaluable asset to Oldham and in particular our town centre.

"As someone who uses public transport almost every day, I understand the significant role the Metrolink network plays in connecting people to our town centre from not just within Oldham, but from Manchester and neighbouring towns too.

"I welcome plans to introduce an additional stop in Oldham and would love to see the Metrolink network continue to grow, further improving connectivity across our borough and to the whole of Greater Manchester."

**27 new trams are on order to bolster the tram network** and used to run more 'double' trams on the busiest lines, with the first set to arrive early next year.

The five-year anniversary comes just weeks after Greater Manchester published its first **Transport Strategy 2040 five year delivery plan**, which included proposals (without secured funding) for a new Metrolink stop at Cop Road in the Beal Valley, and boosted park and ride spaces at the Derker stop, and possibly others in

the borough.

The proposed new tram stop would sit between Derker and Shaw and Crompton and would serve the existing community in Moorside as well as potential new housing.

#### **Oldham and Rochdale Metrolink Timeline**

- 13 June 2012: Monsall to Oldham Mumps section opened.
- 16 December 2012: Derker to Shaw and Crompton section opened.
- 28 February 2013: Newhey to Rochdale Railway Station section opened.
- 27 January 2014: Oldham Town Centre section opened.
- 31 March 2014: Rochdale Town Centre stop opened.