

Wednesday, April 30, 2025

# Draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035 Feedback form

Unique ID

RPTP-0399

## Contact details

Name:

Noemi Holzleg

Do you wish to speak to your submission at a public hearing?

No

## Topic 1: Are we focusing on the right things in the plan?

Do you agree that these focus areas capture Otago's public transport priorities?

Yes

**Tell us more:**

Thank you for working towards electrifying the network. This needs to happen as quickly as possible, to ensure both transport emissions are reduced, and to make buses more affordable to operate. In addition to advocating for more public transport, and more efficient public transport, the ORC needs to be advocating for higher-density development. If urban sprawl is allowed to continue unchecked, as it currently is then public transport simply won't be effective and cars will continue to be necessary. A connected and integrated network: There needs to be a Wanaka-Queenstown connection. This is critical to equity, transport for healthcare, improved productivity, and recreational transport for locals and visitors. A connection between Alexandra, Cromwell, Hawea and Luggate is also important for community connection.

## Topic 2: Should we support community transport services in smaller towns and rural areas?

**Our proposal:** we are considering the establishment of a subsidised community transport programme providing support for transport services in Otago's smaller towns and rural areas.

**What do you think about this proposal?**

**Do you agree with ORC having a role in supporting community transport services?**

Yes

**Are there other initiatives or programmes that you think Council should be considering?**

Yes

### **Tell us more:**

A public transport connection between Wanaka and Queenstown. These are the two fastest growing cities in the country, and two of the most visited cities in the country. Yet there's no public transportation connection between them. Having grown up in Switzerland and using public transportation as my predominant form of getting around, you need to allow for time for behaviour change - initially, people won't want to make sacrifices to take a bus, if it's less convenient than driving. What to do about that? Make people pay for parking, so it's a more expensive option. Subsidise public transportation, to encourage its initial uptake. Ensure a regular and frequent service, that people can rely on. Visitors to the region have almost no option but to rent private vehicles, due to the lack of alternative transport options - this is ludicrous for a town trying to be a sustainable tourist destination.

## **Topic 3: Should we increase our passenger fares?**

**Our proposal:** we are considering increasing the base fare for adult Bee Card passengers from \$2 to \$2.50. This would effectively increase bus fares for all passengers using Bee Cards by 25%.

**What do you think about this proposal?**

**Should Council increase the adult Bee Card fare?**

No

### **Tell us more:**

Increasing bus fares results in reduced bus patronage, and we want more people taking the bus and fewer people driving. I think subsidised public transportation is crucial to encourage initial uptake, and transition people's behaviours to new habits. The bus must be cheaper than driving. Daily tickets should be available too, so people can hop on and hop off between multiple stops when running errands (e.g. take the London Underground as an example, you pay the single fare rate for each journey until you reach the daily fare, and then you don't keep paying more - this way you don't need to buy a day pass originally, if you're not sure how often it'll be used.)

## **Topic 4: Should we charge more for longer trips?**

**Our proposal:** we are considering introducing a zone fare system to our bus networks in Dunedin and Queenstown. Under this system, passengers travelling further distances across multiple zones will pay a higher fare than those travelling short distances within one zone.

**What do you think about this proposal?**

### **Tell us more:**

Typically people living the furthest from the city centre have lower incomes than those living the closest. This means that passengers likely on lower incomes, taking the bus from further away would have to pay more. A simple two tier system with all bus fares within the same urban area costing the same is an option I would prefer, with trips from satellite cities/towns such as proposed buses to/from Oamaru to

Dunedin, Cromwell to Queenstown, or hopefully Wanaka to Queenstown costing more.

## Topic 5: Should we keep our free fares for children (5-12 years)?

### Our proposal:

- A. Retain free fares (100% discount) for children (5-12 years), **AND**
- B. Standardise our concession discount for youth (13-18 years) to 40% across both the Dunedin and Queenstown networks. For example, if the adult fare is \$2, youth pay \$1.20, or if the adult fare is \$2.50, youth pay \$1.50.

### What do you think about this proposal?

**Should Council retain free fares (100% discount) for children (5-12 years)?**

Yes

### Tell us more:

Yes, encourage public transportation for families and children. This will help the next generation grow up with behaviours that tend to using public transportation on a regular basis.

**Should Council standardise our concession discount for youth (13-18 years) to 40% across both the Dunedin and Queenstown networks?**

Yes

### Tell us more:

Evidence shows that the simpler the concession process and pricing is, the less administrative costs there are, and overall the network operates at a lower budget.

There should also be a concession option for seniors (65+), and available to purchase for adults. For example - in the UK this comes as an annual railcard, you pay the annual railcard fee and then you can get 30% discounts on all your train journeys. In Switzerland, adults that usually have to pay full price for journeys can buy an annual „half fare“ card, and then buy all individual tickets for 50% of the adult price (this is then equivalent to the youth and seniors fare, which is 50% discounted, unlike the proposed 40% here). This is ideal for people who don't use public transportation regularly enough (eg commuting daily) to get a annual pass to cover their journey, but would use it frequently on weekends or for longer trips across the country and value the discounted option, to help make the journey cheaper when compared to driving.

## Any other comments?