

Thursday, May 1, 2025

# Draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035 Feedback form

Unique ID

RPTP-0454

## Contact details

Name:

Fiona Jenkin

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:**

I agree with these priorities, however, specifying transport-disadvantaged people as the sole target market for bus services is not helpful. Focus should be on delivering the highest-value-customer services experience for all users, to encourage bus use for commuters into and out of the city to maximize the benefits and cost effectiveness of public transport. By focusing on transport-disadvantaged people, it would be easy to get into the mindset of 'well, they have no other choice, so whatever we give them they should be happy with', rather than working to try to enhance and improve the lives of all who are involved with delivering and using the service.

## 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:**

The majority of friends from outer suburbs of Dunedin have quickly abandoned using public transport due to the unreliability of the service, the additional time it takes to commute, and the difficulty in getting to the bus stops. In addition, issues of safety when traveling on buses on open highways, given the lack of seat-belts etc.

There would need to be a significant public consultation and education campaign to encourage largely self-sufficient and independent-minded rural populations to accept public transport.

Other grass-roots lead programs should be investigated and encouraged ahead of expanding the existing bus to wider areas.

Focus on making the services that already exist for the outer suburbs, and listening to potential commuters needs.

### 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:**

Bus fares must remain as low as possible. For passengers who are 'transport-disadvantaged', the cost of fares is already limiting. For passengers who choose to use the bus services as part of their wish to avoid adding to traffic congestion and parking, the cost of the service needs to be low enough that it compensates for the added inconvenience of using public transport - such as having to navigate set bus schedules; the uncertainty of when the bus will come, or even if it will come; the discomfort of waiting at bus stops, the distance to walk between home and bus stop or bus stop and destination etc.

When bus trips were \$1 after covid, I caught the bus far more than I do now.

### 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?**

**Should Council charge more for longer trips?**

No

**Tell us more:**

Passengers should not be penalized because they don't live closer to work, school etc. People who live further out should be encouraged to use the buses more. As it is, the convenience of ride sharing already wins out over using public transport.

Also, what defines a 'longer trip'? From one side of the city to the other? From further from the city centre?

How much extra admin and work would implementation take, especially with the new bus card system being phased in soon?  
If there is an added charge on longer trips, it should be minimal. Perhaps the \$2.50 fare for longer trips.

## 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:

Absolutely. Children and young people need to be encouraged to use public transport, for community awareness and engagement; improving life skills and sense of autonomy; reducing traffic; and congestion around schools; and easing stresses on parents and caregivers in how to organise child transport. If fares are increased, it will disintentionalise families from paying for bus fares rather than just increasing their car commutes.

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

Yes

## Any other comments?

**Let us know if you have any other comments or ideas on the topics discussed in the Draft Regional Public Transport Plan.**

Driver training and culture needs to improve to see improvements in customer service and bus user experiences and loyalty.

There is a huge difference in customer experience between which driver you get - some are actively helpful, accommodating and friendly; some treat customers with great resentment and like incredibly minor things, like waiting for a customer to work out how to lower the seats on the drop-down seating is a personal offense and that yelling at passengers is appropriate problem solving - its not!

The good bus drivers seem to be the ones who don't end up staying very long, I can only guess it's because they are able to find better places to work where they feel valued through good induction, training and the opportunity to have any concerns heard and acted on to continually improve the service for everyone.

Improving driver work conditions such as split shifts and unsociable hours - like not getting 2 days off in a row, and not getting a weekend day off regularly, I'm certain would help greatly to improve staff retention. Focusing drivers on the need to stick to the timetable for ALL stops along their route is important. There is a bus stop right outside my workplace, but because it's half way along a route, busses can be 10 or 15

minutes early, often stopping several stops further along and waiting, before heading the last blocks to the hub. Also, the new electronic schedule at the bus stop is never accurate.