

Monday, May 5, 2025

Draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035 Feedback form

Unique ID

RPTP-0540

Contact details

Name:

Alasdair Morrison

Organisation (if applicable):

Waikouaiti Coast Community Board

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

Yes

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

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?

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?

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?

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?

Any other comments?



The Chief Executive
Otago Regional Council
Private Bag 1954
Dunedin 9054

1st May 2025

**Otago Regional Council
Draft Otago Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035**

Thank you for the opportunity to make this submission. I write on behalf of the elected members of the Waikouaiti Coast Community Board, and also on behalf of those in our wider community who use public transport, or who would like to use public transport if the services suited their needs.

Communication

Over the years we have enjoyed good communication with ORC staff regarding patronage and timetables for the Route 1 bus service : Dunedin – Palmerston. This helped to provide some clarity regarding the implementation of the weekend service and the provision of extra buses to deal with overcrowding at certain times of day. However, we don't have recent patronage figures which would be of assistance as we endeavour to promote public transport in our North Coast area. We would like to see this rectified, and we believe that some modification to timetables might be advisable.

Fares – Refer to your Summary Document

a) On Page 12 – Topic 3 – you discuss the possibility of increasing bus fares, and you list some of the possible consequences of doing this. We agree with your comments in the 'Things to consider - - -' section.

We have no real issues with increasing the \$2 flat fare to \$2.50 – a weekly increase of \$5 for people making trips to and from the city 5 days a week. We understand your desire to have a well-functioning public transport service that is financially sustainable.

b) On Page 14 – Topic 4 – you discuss your proposal to bring back Zones for calculating fares, and increasing charges based on distance travelled. We are implacably opposed to this proposal, and we believe that it would undo much of the good work that has been achieved in recent years to increase bus patronage since the introduction of flat fares.

c) It is difficult for us to make any detailed comment on your zoning proposal since your document does not give us any idea of what the fare increases might be with the reintroduction of Zones. If your financial folk are using simple arithmetic of multiplying existing passenger numbers by the fare increase to help balance the books, we believe that this would give false figures since we are sure that patronage would decrease if Zones were to be introduced. All in all, we believe that introducing Zones would be a retrograde step.

d) So what should be done to have a financially sustainable public transport system, now and into the future?

i) Discuss the issue with Community Boards.

- ii) Look at how you can improve the service in various areas by adjusting the timetables to have buses travelling to places where people want them, and when people want them.
- iii) Take local demographics into consideration when doing the above. It is not widely recognised that there are parts of our North Coast area where the population is increasing as housing development grows.
- iv) Referring to your comments on Page 11, we suggest that you should challenge Central Government and its apparent '*One size-fits-all*' philosophy. If the overall aim in this country is to reduce the number of cars on the road, then simply looking at dollars as a short term fix may not be the answer.

Safety

We are concerned about the occasions when some passengers have to stand on full buses from the Pine Hill end of the city towards Waitati and beyond. The buses travel at open-road speeds and the consequences of any sudden stop could be horrendous.

Children

On Page 16 – Topic 5 you discuss fares for children. We have no real issues with your proposals, but we feel that you should always have large families in mind when looking to increase teenage fares.

Comparisons

We believe that there is a case for increasing the frequency of buses servicing our North Coast, and there is certainly a case for including the increased population of Warrington in these increased services. A comparison of our current service with those on the Dunedin South Coast and on the Otago Peninsula makes for interesting reading and provides a basis for future discussion.

Your ORC Presentations

We would like to congratulate your Transport Team on the quality of your consultation documents. They are well laid out and present the issues in simple language.

I would like to speak to this presentation at any future hearing.

Kind Regards

