

Monday, March 24, 2025

Draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035 Feedback form

Unique ID

RPTP-0010

Contact details

Name:

Nathan Woodfield

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:

This is a good list. I think the improved "passanger experience" has helped improve the ridership of buses.

The apps and improved access to information on bus times has been great.

I also really love the electric buses we have! Much quieter, less vibration - an overall much improved passager experience. Even if there was no pollution from diesel, I would still much prefer the electric buses!

I feel the electric buses have better acceleration as well? I'm sure the drivers have a better sense of that.

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?

No

Tell us more:

I think the volunteer run service is a great idea. When there are volunteers kindly offered to help make it work, the small financial contribution to make it possible just makes sense!

Really interesting point on how getting data from the service will inform a future public transport scheme which may be needed as populations expand.

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?

Yes

Tell us more:

I read details relating to this in the ODT (Thursday, 20 February 2025). As I understand it, the options being weighed up were adding a fare for children or increasing the fares for adults. I personally think we need to support our children and young people where we can and the adults can afford the extra fifty cents for the high quality service.

In terms of a return trip to work five days a week, the cost will go from \$20 a week to \$25 a week. A practical way to think about it.

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?

Yes

Tell us more:

From what I have seen in the ODT (Wednesday, 19 February 2025) this largely seems reasonable. I will say that the old zoning system we had, of different fares going from one suburb to another, was far too complicated and I saw people reducing the distance they traveled via bus due to it. The zones shown in the ODT appear to be large enough distances with clear enough boundaries I think it is probably

reasonable.

I don't have data on this but my main question would be "Have we sufficiently increased the number of people taking buses in the outer areas - before considering increasing the fares on them?"

I do very much like the idea, however, that the increase in fares can improve the frequency and also expand the services provided. Such as new buses out to the Airport, Milton, and even out to Oamaru! I think this will help provide real opportunities for people.

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:

I strongly agree we should keep the 100% discount for children. As I understand it, school bus services have reduced in number lately and the Orbus system is now more important than ever for children. It also provides a degree of independence for children to be able to move around without having to have parents drive them everywhere.

Even to the people without children, or never use the bus themselves, this is such a great benefit to society and the community. The rush hour traffic for the school runs around 3PM places great pressure on our roads and the more children that can use the buses instead the better.

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

Yes

Tell us more:

I don't have a strong opinion on this either way. It does seem reasonable.

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.

There has been discussion on expanded access of dogs in buses in the ODT recently (Thursday, 20 March 2025). I wanted to write-in specifically against such a proposal.

The current rules are sufficient for a clean, reasonable, and orderly bus service: "domestic pets are only allowed to travel on buses during off-peak times and while "fully enclosed in a suitable pet carrier" ".

Buses are for people first and foremost. Accommodations have been made for people needing to move dogs with the current rules. People not wanting to interact with dogs need to be more than equally accommodated - indeed a bus full of dogs will likely reduce the ridership of people using buses for transport!

There will be issues with noise, filth, allergies, disease transmission, health & safety, and injury with expanded dog access. If absolutely necessary it would only be reasonable to expect dogs to have to pay an extra ticket at a higher price than normal passage for the added space used along with paying a large bond that is taken for any barking, urinating or soiling buses, and a very substantial compensation for any injuries caused to people. Orbus would also need to commit to a high rate of cleaning and replacement of seats.