

Thursday, April 3, 2025

# Draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035 Feedback form

Unique ID

RPTP-0164

## Contact details

Name:

Peter Dowden

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?

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

Yes

## 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:**

use "code share" to on-sell unused seats on Intercity (for example) to local users. Cheaper than putting on another bus.

## 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:**

It is a reasonable increase in line with inflation but it doesn't need to be a nice round number, so 2.37 could be better

## 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:**

but not too much more (certainly not double the fare for double the distance)

## 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

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

No

**Tell us more:**

it should be 50% not 40, otherwise I agree

**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.**

Loing submission to follow by email

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 10, 2025 12:37 PM  
**To:** Regional Public Transport Plan  
**Subject:** Submission on draft RPTP 2025

Tēnā koutou

I think this is the best Draft RPTP I have seen (there have been some right duds over the years).  
Very comprehensive so well done.

I want to give my support to all parts of the draft that I have not commented on below.

I would like to appear in support of my submission, although I may find this difficult due to a neurological/neuropsychological disorder.

I will now review specific parts of the draft, giving commentary (in brackets) and suggestions "in quote marks" for additions to the text.

p14 Our achievements...

(I note this doesn't mention anything going wrong in the last 10 years)

Add: "2020: physically distanced bus travel and free bus travel successfully implemented during Covid 19 epidemic"

Add: "2023: successful return to full bus timetable following prolonged driver shortage"

p15 (there should be mention of walking and cycling modes, as these are somewhat enabled by provision of the bus service; providing rainy day alternatives, flat bike tyre contingencies etc)

p21 Public information actions

add "PI A8 Publish regular reports on meeting or failing to meet the performance measures given in Section 7.1 Table 10" (this to include my further reporting suggestion which I will give in that section)

P23 2.3 Customer Service

CS P3 Personal items on public transport

add: "dogs wearing an approved muzzle"

"surfboards on approved surfboard racks to be fitted to St Clair and Brighton buses"

#### p24 Customer service actions

add "CS A6 Upskill the present security staff at the Dunedin bus hub to become security and customer service staff, with knowledge of bus services, routes and timetables and with the ability to contact bus operators by two way radio"

#### p25 2.4 Ticketing system

add "TS A3 Request a local residency data point be added to Motu Move account information, so that Otago Regional Council citizens/ratepayers can be given a discount on travel" (I will develop this idea further under Fares section)

p27 (great that you raised a further \$45000 from cruise passengers but it should have been more; as non ratepayers and mostly non taxpayers and non NZ road users, they aren't putting anything in to the system)

#### p28 Special events actions

SE A2 add "... and augment the scheduled passenger services with extra bus operations if necessary" (this isn't clear in the policy)

SE A3 (there needs to be more effort on making public transport flow more smoothly to and from events, with special priority in traffic)

p30 SQ A1 (the over-emphasis of a clockface timetable and overuse of timing points are costing the ORC a fortune and preventing a freer flow of buses, with faster journeys and provision of more services. For example, many buses at evenings and weekends work only one and a half hours out of every two hours, with buses and their drivers paid to sit empty at terminuses. These buses could be operating a more frequent, if less able to be memorised, timetable, at lower unit costs. Clockface timetables made sense back when everyone wore a watch but no-one had access to real-time information. Nowadays most people check the time on their phones, on which they could also be checking their next bus in real time. As for timing points, in all my years as a bus driver, no passenger has ever thanked me for stopping for four and a half minutes in the middle of nowhere but many have complained, saying they have places to be)

Add (after "as much as practical") "... variation from strict clockface timetables will be allowed if it enables provision of a better service to sparsely-served areas or at quiet times of the day or week"

add "Intermediate timing points are to be avoided where catch-up time can be more efficiently scheduled at the ends of routes"

SQ A4 add "Enforcement of vehicle quality standards" and "Enforcement of vehicle accessibility standards"

Change "Security staff" to read "Security and customer service staff..."

SQ Add "... and accessibility" after "punctuality"

p28 (happy to support this section but it needs more emphasis on the efficient provision of buses at special events. These buses do not meet their full potential if they can only travel at the same speed as a car going to the same event. Also there needs to be more emphasis on augmenting buses where these reach full capacity, for example an event at the Stadium needs more buses between there and the Hub than the timetable can ever provide)

SE A3 Add: "... by giving priority to public transport vehicles bringing people to and from the event."

\

SE A3 Add "Bus services will be augmented where capacity is likely to exceed that provided by scheduled services, for example between the Stadium and the Bus Hub."

(Anzac Day Dawn Parade: This is an unusual event occurring before normal service commencement due to the public holiday timetable. Although it attracts approximately 2000, not the 10 000 of a "major event", the people it does attract have a lower level of mobility. It would be good to make an exception in this case, and get all the buses that are being taken on to the road anyway that day to depart each terminus at 5.30am and run fast to town before assuming their normal scheduled positions. The amount of public benefit, goodwill and positive publicity for Orbus this would generate would make it well worthwhile. Also it would generate increased bus usage for the rest of the day.)

SE A2 add "...this minimum attendance would not apply to Anzac Day Dawn Services"

P32 Vehicle quality standards

Add "Regularly monitor fleets for continued RUB compliance and publish regular reports on fleet RUB compliance"

p34 ORC interpretation

(it is a huge indictment on our territorial local authorities that all ORC can expect at a bus stop is a step height from the ground under a bus to the bus floor. This shouldn't be happening. The step height should be from the kerb, at a bus stop where buses can park easily and safely kerbside)

p36 Total Mobility

add "TM A6 Allow a hybrid Total Mobility system where a passenger is taken to/from a bus stop and assisted on/off the bus by the Total Mobility provider" (many TM users would be happy with such an arrangement; a good example is Palmerston to Dunedin where there may be no great need to be travel the whole way in a small vehicle)

p59 rural network

(Case study: Dunedin-Palmerston)

The best way to improve rural/regional bus or coach services would be to purchase spare capacity on Intercity and other long distance coach services. For example, Palmerston to Dunedin departs at 0700, 1100, 1645. Intercity departs on the same route at 1305 and 1920. Northbound 0840, 1535, 1800 could be augmented by 0730 and 1315 departures. Airlines do this all the time, calling it "code sharing".

If the Macraes Mine workers' bus is added to this timetable an even more frequent service results. The Macraes bus leaves Dunedin with a few miners, then more get on at Waitati, Waikouaiti and Palmerston until the bus is full arriving at the mine. This pattern of loading is exactly countercyclical to the Orbus Route 1 which leaves Dunedin with the moist passengers, then drops them off at Waitati, Waikouaiti then arrives with its least number at Palmerston. Macraes buses thus have spare seats between Dunedin and somewhere on the way to Macraes, leaving at 1600, 1700 and 1715, all times which people like to head to Waitati or Waikouaiti. Now I understand that the Macraes bus is not for the ORC to commandeer, but this shows that there is already a stream of users and a stream of money being paid to move them.)

(Rural school buses)

(It's quite clear that rural school buses under the current scheme can't become part of the regional transport system for the general public, but this was not always the case. Up to the late 1990s, adult passengers were allowed by arrangement with the bus company. In the "10 to 30 years speculative" aspirations for regional transport, it could be the case that school transport could be reintegrated, especially if the ORC promotes and advocates for the idea. I would also point out that I recently caught a Picton to Christchurch coach on Intercity, which left Picton full of school kids attending school in Blenheim.)

P66 Next 10 years

(I support continued improvement to the Dunedin network. There should be expansion at the ends of existing routes, sometimes allowing these to join at the edge of the city to serve new areas of housing like Wakari Rd, Dalziel Rd. Pine Hill, Concord and Corstorphine routes should extend into Green Island to create a hub here. Abbotsford and Brighton should be separated as each is destroying the other's service quality. Outer Mosgiel needs much more service. Looping the Mosgiel service to continue along factory, Puddle Alley then Three Mile Hill roads should be considered; this would also nicely augment the Halfway Bush service into town. The Mosgiel Express is poorly implemented and is underwhelming in its uptake. It needs a good half dozen stops at each end: all stops to Mosgiel level crossing then all stops Oval to the Hub. And stop sending it through Caversham: that road now has a 30km/h limit and a very sharp judder bar both added since that questionable route decision was made.)

## P67 Integral and exempt services

(as discussed above, workers' buses like the Macraes Mine and Finegand freezing works buses could be used to augment a regional transport service. Both routes are fullest at their outer extremities, which means they have spare capacity leaving from and arriving in Dunedin; any public transport planner would dream of having a traffic generator at the outer end of a route.) (see also above comment on rural school buses)

P68 NF P1 add "workers' buses arranged by employers may be identified as potential integral services and can be invited to become integral exempt services, and be eligible for the same financial assistance as other exempt services."

P68 NF P1 add "rural school buses contracted by the Ministry of Education may be identified as potential integral services, and policy changes sought and considered to integrate these as part of a future regional network"

## P84 6.2 fares

(It is disreputable to charge the children of adult beneficiaries more to travel than their parents. Please as a priority reduce the youth fare to 50% a real "half fare".)

(I grudgingly support the proposed standard fare increase to \$2.50, but I think the increase is uncomfortably large and sudden. It would be far better to put fares up 10c a year than 50c every few years. Do this on 1 March when the "March madness" traffic surge hits.)

(more off peak fares should be considered, to take some load off crowded services at peak times. Even a "happy hour" could help do this)

(It would be reasonable to charge a surcharge on non-residents and non registered users, above the \$2.50 level. ORC ratepayers and residents are paying in to the system and deserve recognition of their contribution)

(Cash payment should attract a much stronger surcharge to disincentivise cash use prior to eliminating it altogether. I suggest a \$5 cash fare)

(Unaccompanied young children under 12 should not be receiving free travel without any transaction. Their free travel should require use of a registered card or being accompanied by an adult. If they are required to pay a nominal cash fare without a card, even if they then negotiate a free ride for compassionate reasons, at least this involves a conversation with the adult responsible for their welfare: during the journey, namely the driver.)

(registration of passengers, such as with a registered Bee card, or using a credit card, means that passengers can be identified. We know who is on the bus. This improves safety and security.)



F P2 add "off-peak use incentive" to the list of fare structure elements

F P2 add "resident/ratepayer status" to the list of fare structure elements

f P2 add "preferring/incentivising registration of users through use of registered fare cards or credit cards for safety/security reasons" to the list of fare structure elements

F P3 change "youth 40%" to "50%"

F P6 delete "six" to read "reviews at least yearly"

P93 Table 10

(Some buses are not compliant with the RUB and this does not appear to be being monitored)

Add a "fleet compliance with RUB" target and monitor this regularly, checking current fleet as well as additions to the fleet

P96

(these maps are vague to the point of preventing the reader from knowing what is proposed)

P118: (There seems to be too much emphasis on keeping service contractors geographically separate. This is unnecessary: passengers don't need to know who the contractor is any more than what brand of tyres are on the bus.)

from

[REDACTED]

...please consider the environment and go by public transport...

...arohatia te taiao, haere ma runga pahi...

I agree with linking parts of the inner city by bus but I think the best way to do this is by using existing bus routes radiating from the present hub simply by adding more bus stops and adjusting routes:

1: Add bus stops in Great King St between St Andrew and Hanover streets adjacent and opposite Centre City Mall

2: Divert some (not all) York Pl routes via Filleul St and Moray Pl to new stops outside and opposite Town Hall to serve the library and civic centre

3: add stops in Moray Pl near AA and First Church to better serve this area

4: add stops in upper Moray Pl near View St and rear of Art Gallery to serve this area

Most of these stops would be connected by a bus every 5 minutes using existing services. It would cost a small fortune to provide a similar service with a new loop bus wastefully duplicating existing services.

Incidentally, it appears to have been the DCC that influenced the present very small number of bus stops in the inner city, where stops are up to 700m apart, instead of the normal 200-300m in most parts of the city.