

Friday, May 2, 2025

Draft Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035 Feedback form

Unique ID

RPTP-0519

Contact details

Name:

Mat Woods

Organisation (if applicable):

Destination Queenstown and Lake Wānaka Tourism

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:

We agree with the focus areas however the supporting priorities aren't ambitious enough with regards to environmental sustainability, alternate transport modes to buses such as gondolas and water ferries, along with creating an integrated network.

The target for a fully electric bus fleet for Queenstown by 2035 isn't ambitious enough to support Queenstown Lakes district's vision for regenerative tourism and the goal of a carbon zero visitor economy by 2030 outlined in the region's destination management plan, 'Travel to a thriving future'.

The target for a fully electric fleet should be 2030 across the entire province including Queenstown and Wānaka.

There's significant opportunity to invest in Queenstown Lakes district's public transport to strengthen the region's position as a world class visitor destination, supporting a rapidly growing population, whilst addressing a carbon zero visitor economy by 2030.

The draft plan focuses heavily on increasing bus frequency to meet growing demand, reduce congestion, and improve reliability. With our district's geographical challenges, it's vital that alternative mass rapid transport (MRT) solutions are considered including a zero-emissions ferry network, gondolas and ropeways.

Lake Whakatipu is underutilised. The ferry service should be expanded to surrounding areas in the immediate future sooner than the 6-30 year timeframe proposed.

Queenstown's Frankton Marina can accommodate electric boat chargers and with this technology in place the Queenstown Lakes could lead the way with a zero-emissions water ferry.

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?

No

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

Yes

Tell us more:

The ORC has highlighted the need to assess demand for future public transport services in Wānaka, however we would like to see a full transport solution introduced now.

A community-based transport solution is not sufficient to service Wānaka and the Upper Clutha's growing population.

There is a noticeable absence of public transport connecting Wānaka with Albert Town, Hawea and Luggate and we would like to see a standard public system introduced as a priority.

As the Upper Clutha district continues to grow, it is also a missed opportunity to exclude Wānaka from the proposed bus connection for Alexandra, Cromwell, and Queenstown and we'd like the ORC to consider Wānaka within these connections.

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:

We don't oppose a potential 50c increase in the adult fare to \$2.50 however we would like consideration given to the fact that there are considerable economic benefits that come with electrification of the fleet and much lower running costs as a result.

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:

We do not support a zone fare system in Queenstown and believe the fare price should remain consistent across the entire Whakatipu basin, ensuring the district's transport system is equitable with an uncomplicated payment model for both locals and visitors.

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:

We support the continuation of free fares (100% discount) for all children under 12 years of age to ensure public transport is an appealing proposition to local and visiting families, resulting in less congestion on the roads.

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

Yes

Tell us more:

We support the proposal to standardise a concession discount for youth (13-18 years) to 40%. If the adult fare is raised to \$2.50 as proposed, this would mean a youth discount rate of 40% would remain unchanged from the current \$1.50 which we support.

Reiterating our feedback about zoning fares, youth concession prices should be consistent across the entire Whakatipu basin.

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.

We support proposed improvements to real time tracking/ planning via the Transit app for a seamless and convenient experience.

We support the upcoming rollout of a national contactless payment system Motu Move and would welcome the opportunity for Queenstown to be prioritised for this rollout sooner than 2026. As a rapidly growing region and world class visitor destination, residents and visitors expect to access payment technology that is already available on transport networks around the world, which would contribute to a convenient and seamless experience and encourages repeat use.

According to the Queenstown Visitor Experience Survey year ending December 2024*, public transport rates fifth in 'opportunities for improvement' (behind roadworks, parking, traffic flow and cost of visiting). Of international visitors surveyed, 15% say they have caught a Queenstown public transport bus, along with 14% of New Zealanders who do. It is therefore crucial that we consider visitors coming to Queenstown and the wider Whakatipu basin and provide public transport that resembles that of a leading tourism destination.

The survey also tells us that visitor bus use increases significantly in winter, highlighting the need to review transport frequency and luggage storage according to the seasons. General verbatim feedback identified key themes: frequency of transport, pricing, complications in travel routes and real-time travel alerts and updates.

It is crucial that we consider visitors and locals travelling into and around the wider Queenstown Lakes district and provide a service consistent with that of a leading tourism destination for the duration of their stay.