

## Make Submission

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### Transport and Urban Development Support/Oppose

See page 13 of the Consultation Document.

**Please select one of the following:** I generally agree with the activity proposed for Transport and Urban Development.

### Transport and Urban Development Comments

#### Please provide any comments

Kerry Stevens – submission to Environment Canterbury’s LTP 2018-2028 re options for Public Transport.

In general I support Option 2 to increase rates with no increase to fares.

However I do not support the proposal to reduce the Total Mobility maximum subsidy from \$35 to \$30.

Background information provided by Ecan to support this proposal includes:

#### “Why is the Total Mobility subsidy being reduced from \$35 to \$30 per trip?”

The funding provided for the Total Mobility scheme is not enough to cover the costs of trips now being taken across the region. There has been an increase in the costs to deliver the service, driven by inflation and changing usage patterns. To maintain the Total Mobility service for everyone eligible, we need to reduce the trip subsidy cap.

#### How many trips will this reduction affect?

Approximately 3% of all trips taken in the entire Canterbury region.

#### How many trips in my area will this affect?

- 1 Greater Christchurch = 2.86%
- 2 Ashburton = 0.49%
- 3 Timaru = 0.51%
- 4 Waimate = 0.08%

\*% based on total number of trips taken in 2016/17 financial year”

In response to my query about how many trips per annum in Timaru District would be affected by this proposed reduction in the maximum Total Mobility subsidy, Sharon Boyle, Administration & Total Mobility Coordinator, Environment Canterbury replied: “Based on 2016/2017 figures, 0.51% of Total Mobility transactions in Timaru were over \$30. That is 26 Trips.”

Given that the maximum saving to Environment Canterbury under this proposal is \$5 per trip, it follows that the maximum saving across Timaru District for a whole financial year is  $26 \times \$5 = \$130$ .

It seems to me there are two options to cover this cost:

- 1 Reduce the Total Mobility subsidy from \$35 to \$30 per trip as is currently proposed. The effect of this option is that travel for our most vulnerable residents who live in remote locations will find travel less affordable which may have significant consequences for their mobility and therefore their quality of life, rural isolation and mental health; OR
- 2 Increase Environment Canterbury rates across Timaru district to recover the \$130 required to maintain the Total Mobility subsidy at \$35 per trip.

Timaru District has 22,262 rateable units. I believe a much better option would be retain the Total Mobility at \$35 for Timaru District residents and to recover the \$130 by increasing rates by an average of \$0.0058 (0.58 cents) per rateable property per annum. Yes, a rates increase of less than 1 cent per rateable property per annum would fully cover the total cost of retaining this subsidy across Timaru District to support our most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents.

I do not have the data for rateable units and Total Mobility trips for other Districts, but the percentage of trips affected in Ashburton and Waimate is similar to, or less than, the 0.51% of Total Mobility trips in Timaru District. Hence I believe that the impact on ratepayers in Mid & South Canterbury of retaining the status quo of \$35 for the maximum Total Mobility subsidy would be equally negligible.

I suspect that this proposal has come about because the proportion of Total Mobility trips for Greater Christchurch is 2.86% which is about 6 times greater than the rest of Canterbury. I also suspect that the relocation of ex-Christchurch people to Waimakari and Selwyn Districts over recent years accounts for the “changing usage patterns” in Ecan’s rationale for this proposal.

No doubt the population re-location to Waimakari and Selwyn Districts has contributed significantly to increasing costs in maintaining the Total Mobility subsidy at the current level of \$35. However no evidence has been presented which shows that this increase is unaffordable for ratepayers. Even if the problem is 6x greater in Waimakari, Selwyn and Christchurch (and therefore 6x more expensive), it seems likely that retaining the subsidy at \$35 would cause Environment Canterbury rates to rise by a mere \$0.03 (3 cents) per rateable unit per annum in Greater Christchurch.

On this basis, I respectfully submit that retaining the Total Mobility subsidy at \$35 maximum across Canterbury is not only very affordable but also miniscule if it is incorporated into the Environment Canterbury rates increase. I would also argue that the proposed alternative, which is to reduce the maximum subsidy to \$30, will have a disproportionate and harmful effect on some of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents.

Therefore I urge you to re-examine this issue and to retain the Total Mobility subsidy at \$35 maximum by incorporating the cost into Environment Canterbury rates increases, if not for all of Canterbury then certainly for all Mid & South Canterbury.

Kind regards

Kerry Stevens