

**From:** Carina Duke <cduke@blindfoundation.org.nz>  
**Sent:** Monday, 26 March 2018 1:04 p.m.  
**To:** Mailroom Mailbox  
**Subject:** Submission on the Long Term Plan - specifically Transport and Urban Development  
**Attachments:** Blind Foundation Ecan Long Term Plan 2018 -28 Submission.docx

Hi attached is the submission from the Blind Foundation. I wish to attend a hearing.

Note your website does not allow an attachment to be added to a submission – hence this email. The terms and conditions section of your registration page take you to the home page not terms and conditions.

Regards

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**Beyond vision loss**

## Blind Foundation Submission

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### **Blind Foundation Submission on the New Zealand Health Survey**

**7/07/2017**

The Blind Foundation is the main provider of rehabilitative, support and advocacy services for blind and low vision New Zealanders. The Blind Foundation has approximately 12,000 clients throughout the country.

#### **Our Purpose**

To enable people who are blind or have low vision to be self-reliant and live the life they choose.

#### **Our Vision**

Life without limits

Kahore e Mutunga ki te Ora

#### **Four Key Priorities**

1. Independent living
2. Access for all
3. Reach more people
4. Building a foundation for the future

The Blind Foundation advises government, business and the community on inclusive standards to ensure that the people we represent can participate and contribute equally. We have four major contracts with government. We value our relationships with officials and ministers. We seek to act as a trusted advisor and specialist on the blindness sector. We are a long-serving and expert provider of services to the sector.

This submission covers the public transport issues raised in the Long Term Plan. The Blind Foundation do not support any of the three options presented in the consultation document.

As noted in the consultation document, regional transport "...improves social connectedness and wellbeing in communities; ...". The options proposed will not achieve this for all people living within the Canterbury Region.

The Greater Christchurch Regional Development Strategy has the strategic goals that include:

- "People and communities have equitable access to a range of integrated community infrastructure, facilities and services, including education, health, sport, recreation and core council services."
- "An efficient, reliable, safe and resilient transport system for people and businesses reduces dependency on private motor vehicles, promotes active and public transport and improves accessibility for all people."
- "Infrastructure, including transport, is resilient, timely and affordable, and comprehensively integrated with land use planning."

In the Update August 2016 Section 4 - Our Changing Opportunities and Challenges, it is noted that integrated planning and investment in infrastructure is required. Also included in the update is promoting the use of public transport as a transport choice.

Those who have disabilities are over represented in unemployment statistics. An NZIER report in 2017 found that the rate of unemployment for people with a disability is 50 per cent higher than that of the total workforce. This means those who have an impairment are less likely to own a car as well as having less disposable income.

A study on Barriers to Employment identified transportation problems as a barrier. This included cost of transportation and lack of access to public transportation (Singley, 2003).

People who are blind or have low vision do not have the option to drive or cycle to participate in social activities, access services, places of learning or employment. There is a reliance on Public Transportation (PT) and Total Mobility (TM) for travel.

The current system with Super Stops is a challenge for those who are blind, deafblind or have low vision. The need to identify approaching buses and move between buses on a platform is challenging and has resulted in people with vision loss no longer using buses.

For those who have alternative options for travel the use of the private motor vehicle is still more attractive than PT due to the time to travel, routes, and free or cheap parking within a short walking distance of their destinations. The Christchurch City Council has extended their one-hour free parking which encourages people to travel by car to the CBD as it is faster than busing and may be cheaper on some journeys. The reasons for not using PT or active modes of travel should be investigated as part of the review. The impact congestion has had on travel choice should be included in this review.

The Central City is not yet fully open and businesses have yet to return. Once these are in place there will be more people travelling for work, business, daily activities, education, social connections and leisure to the CBD.

Reliance on fare increases to a level that meets the majority of the shortfall can have the effect of reducing patronage. This is for two reasons, those in lower socioeconomic areas may not be able to afford the higher fares and the new fares may not be cost effective compared to using private cars. Spreading the costs of using the roads and associated infrastructure across the ratable population provides an equitable solution. Any fare increases should be limited while there is a lack of incentives to using the bus.

Removing the six routes will affect members of the Blind Foundation who rely on these for their access to the community and essentials of daily living. This will lead to less social connectivity and impact on wellbeing.

There has been no research completed on the current users of the service to inform decision makers of potential solutions. This should include frequency of travel, destinations and purpose of travel. Reducing the frequency of the service during the day and/or across the week could be an alternative to cancelling the services.

Reducing the maximum TM subsidy may only impact on 3% of the total trips but there is no research to show who these users are and the effect this will have on their travel. This could increase a regular traveler's daily fare by \$10, which is significant for those who are not in full time employment.

## **Recommendations:**

### **Bus Routes:**

Continue the routes and review the current users, their requirements, destinations, frequency and time of travel to identify how better to provide these essential services.

### **Ticketing:**

Introduce a ticketing system that meets the requirements of all users. Aim for national consistency and consult widely with users prior to selection. Ticketing systems should be:

- Easy and logical to obtain
- Efficient, easy and logical to use (including tag on/tag off)
- Accessible and equitable in use – independently use and top up, able to access balance and know when the fare has been deducted.
- Integrated with Total Mobility Cards

### **Infrastructure:**

- Work with Local Authorities to improve accessibility and prioritisation of infrastructure.
- Install continuous bus lanes along identified areas of congestion to improve travel times and make the travel choice more attractive than private cars.

- Have dedicated positions for buses at Super stops – this will increase accessibility for those who have impairments and specifically those who are blind or have low vision who cannot identify the route of the approaching bus.
- Install accessible Real Time Information - investigate with experts and invest in systems that are usable.

**Fares:**

Fares should not be a barrier to people who have an impairment using PT or a disincentive. The costs of the service should be spread across the population as a cost of the transportation network.

**Total Mobility:**

Investigate the impact of a reduction in the subsidy maximum on the end user before implementing the change.

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**References**

New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, (2017) *Valuing access to work* retrieved from [https://nzier.org.nz/static/media/filer\\_public/b1/be/b1be61f9-cf49-4cde-a0d1-2d2e8bc2ba8f/valuing\\_access\\_to\\_work.pdf](https://nzier.org.nz/static/media/filer_public/b1/be/b1be61f9-cf49-4cde-a0d1-2d2e8bc2ba8f/valuing_access_to_work.pdf)

Singley, S. G, (2003), *Barrier to Employment among Long-term Beneficiaries: A review of recent international evidence*, retrieved from <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/working-papers/wp-04-04-barriers-to-employment.html>