

19 April 2024

Via email: rltp.submissions@orc.govt.nz

SUBMISSION TO OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL ON THE MID-TERM REVIEW OF THE REGIONAL LAND TRANSPORT PLANS 2021-2031

Thank you for the opportunity to present this submission on the Mid-Term Review of the Regional Land Transport Plans 2021-2031 (RLTP). Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC or Council) has significant institutional knowledge and on the ground experience addressing complex intergenerational transport challenges. This experience will positively contribute to the development of the RLTP in a way that can complement the Otago and Southland Regional Transport Committees objectives for the region's transport network.

QLDC broadly supports the RLTP, its vision, objectives and priorities. However, there are a number of matters that Council wishes to highlight for further consideration. The following key messages are expanded on in the body of this submission:

- QLDC strongly supports the RLTPs 10 Year Investment Headline Targets and 10 year Transport Investment Priorities.
- The RLTP should further recognise and provide for resident and visitor growth of the Queenstown Lakes District (QLD). This growth has had, and continues to have, a significant impact on the ability of the district's transport network to operate efficiently and effectively, resulting in increased travel time and decreases in reliability and resilience.
- The RLTP should better recognise the QLDs significance to the Aotearoa New Zealand economy, and make commensurate investment.
- QLDC supports the emphasis placed on climate response and emissions reduction, however additional detail is required on the actions to achieve these goals.
- QLDs alpine landscape, climate variability and difficult road conditions should be recognised and provided for within the RLTP.
- QLDCs transport network provides extensive and economically important inter-regional connections and strategic corridors (including the Queenstown Airport), and these should be strongly recognised in the RLTP.

QLDC would like to be heard at any hearings that result from this consultation process and welcomes any other opportunity to discuss matters raised in this submission.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Yours sincerely,



Tony Avery
General Manager – Property and Infrastructure

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1. The Queenstown Lakes District Context

- 1.1. The QLD has an average daily population of 71,920 (visitors and residents) and a peak daily population of 114,790¹. The district is experiencing unprecedented growth with its population projected to nearly double over the next 30 years, and is one of Aotearoa New Zealand's premier visitor destinations, drawing people from all over the world.
- 1.2. Economic activity and growth within the QLD are more in line with metro centres, with GDP growth on average outperforming the rest of Aotearoa New Zealand. The provision of adequate transport infrastructure and services to accommodate resident and visitor growth is a key challenge for QLDC. For the year ending June 2023, there were 3.3 million unique visitor arrivals to the district, which equates to 63 visitors per resident. Affordability constraints present ongoing difficulties for local government with significant capital work cost escalations². This backdrop in relation to services funded by ratepayers creates significant pressure on the district's transport network.
 - 1.1. Infometrics NZ³ shows that the GDP in the QLD was provisionally up 5.9% for the year to December 2023, compared to the previous year. Growth in the QLD was higher than in Aotearoa New Zealand as a whole (0.7%). Tourism expenditure also grew by a strong 9.2% over the year to December 2023, reflecting the ongoing recovery of international visitor arrivals. This further exemplifies the importance of providing adequate transport infrastructure and services to accommodate resident and visitor growth.
 - 1.2. Because of geographical limitations, the district's transport network cannot be significantly increased (i.e. via lane additions). Accordingly, the network must be utilised more efficiently to transport an increasing number of people and goods. A balanced investment in road improvements as well as encouraging alternative modes of transport, discouraging single-occupancy private motor vehicles, and encouraging commuting outside peak periods must be supported.
 - 1.3. The QLDC Spatial Plan⁴ was developed through the Grow Well Whaiora partnership between Central Government, Kāi Tahu, QLDC and Otago Regional Council, and provides a proven framework to deliver infrastructure to enable the district to grow well.
 - 1.4. The region's Regenerative Tourism Plan⁵ has been achieved through partnership between QLDC, regional tourism organisations, Kāi Tahu, the Department of Conservation and other agencies. Ensuring that transport networks preserve and enhance the visitor experience is of paramount importance.

¹ <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/media/ygilrton/demand-projections-summary-march-2022-2023-to-2053.pdf>

² Infometrics, Analysing increases in local government costs – February 2024 *'Capital cost escalation had accelerated substantially over 2021-2023, with the overall capital goods price index peaking at 13%pa, and civil construction costs at 15%pa. In greater detail, transport capital cost escalation peaked at 19%pa (with bridges peaking at 29%pa!), and water systems peaking at 15%pa'. 'Bridges are 38% more expensive to build over the last three years, and sewerage systems are 30% more expensive. Roads and water supply systems are around 27% more expensive'*.

³ <https://qem.infometrics.co.nz/queenstown-lakes-district>

⁴ <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/your-council/council-documents/queenstown-lakes-spatial-plan/>

⁵ <https://www.queenstownnz.co.nz/regenerative-tourism-2030/>

1.5. QLDC's Climate and Biodiversity Plan⁶ strives to reduce emissions, prepare for climate adaptation and undertake biodiversity restoration. The plan pursues a low-emission transport network and a collaborative approach to travel behaviour change. The transportation sector is the most significant source of greenhouse gas emissions within the district⁷.

2. Population demand in QLD in both residents and visitors alike continues to increase year on year.

2.1. The population estimates in table 1 of the RLTP⁸ represent resident population only. This fails to represent that the visitor population can be almost double the resident population on a peak day. QLDC believe it is important that this also be represented in table 1 and throughout other relevant parts of the RLTP as this has a crucial effect on transport network demands.

2.2. Table 2 of the RLTP⁸ represents Otago rather than the QLD. QLDC considers it is important to represent QLD future resident demand. QLDCs most recent population projections show an increase in resident population from 52,020 in 2023 to 63,640 by 2033 which is a 2% increase per year. Equally as impactful is the visitor increase. On an average day this is projected to increase from 19,900 in 2023 to 31,430 by 2033, a 4.7% increase.

2.3. Both the increase in resident and visitor population accentuates the importance of supporting the 10 year transport investment priorities highlighted in the RLTP including:

- Enhance network maintenance and resilience to ensure community access and connectivity.
- Optimise an efficient and accessible transport network through enhanced mode choice provision across the regions.
- Promote safety and wellbeing outcomes across the regional transport network.

2.4. Further explanation of the impact of an aging population on the network should be given, for example public transport access for older adults and lowered pavements.

2.5. Activity limitations by Territorial Authorities (TA) also requires further explanation of what the impact on the network this has i.e. difficulty hearing and seeing requires the implementation of tactile ground surface indicators at pedestrian kerb crossing points, approaches to stairways, ramps etc.

2.6. Recommendations

2.6.1. The RLTP be amended to explicitly recognise resident and visitor population changes specific to the QLD, due to its historic and continued high growth. In particular, the RLTP should use the population projections⁹ produced by QLDC to support RLTP actions.

2.6.2. The RLTP be amended to address the needs of an aging population and those with other needs on the transport network. This could include (but is not limited to) tactile paving,

⁶ https://www.qldc.govt.nz/media/iw3pqsy1/qldc_climate-and-biodiversity-plan_jun22-web.pdf

⁷ Carbon Zero Discussion Paper at page 6. Regenerative Tourism By 2030 (queenstownnz.co.nz)

⁸ Page 14

⁹ <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/community/population-and-demand/>

suitable approaches to stairways and ramps (including for buses and other transport options), lowered kerbs and pedestrian crossings.

3. The nature of QLD's network and physical landscape provides challenges and limits viable options for the transport network.

- 3.1. QLDC support the emphasis on the extensive funding required in the region. Further attention should be given to QLD's alpine landscape. The steep and winding roads with extreme climate and temperature changes and weather patterns provide challenges to road users, especially given the high number of visitors that are unfamiliar with these driving conditions.
- 3.2. More severe weather patterns, such as heavy rainfall causes slips and slides on the network causing road closures (often for long periods of time - up to 48 hours). The QLD also experiences snowfall and ice events (i.e., over the crown range). This emphasises the requirement for a reasonable funding allocation to ensure user safety and preventative maintenance can be implemented. These factors also make maintenance activities on the network difficult.
- 3.3. The extreme consequential impacts of natural disasters should also be recognised in order to highlight the importance of resilience and maintenance activities in the QLD.
- 3.4. The inclusion of tables 5 and 6¹⁰ (main means of travel for work and education) are important context in the RLTP. However, the document provides no explanation of what this means for the region/s. The reliance on private car, truck or van appears to be the highest choice of travel across all of the territorial areas for work purposes, and the QLD still has a heavy reliance on private car usage. Within the QLD, this has a significant impact on key transport corridors, increasing congestion especially at peak times with no alternative routes or public transport lanes. Reducing private vehicle usage and increasing the use of public transport patronage or active travel use is a significant challenge in the QLD. This highlights the need for investment in public transport and active travel infrastructure to encourage the uptake of these modes.
- 3.5. Recommendations
 - 3.5.1. The RLTP recognise and provide support for QLDC to manage those challenge that the district's alpine environment places on the transport network in terms of challenging roads for drivers, variable and extreme weather conditions, maintenance difficulties, and the need to increase resilience, particularly on the Glenorchy-Queenstown Road and Crown Range Road¹¹.

4. QLDC supports the emphasis on reduction of our transport emissions in the RLTP.

- 4.1. QLDC supports the emphasis on a climate response in the mid-term review. Objective 3 relates to connectivity and choice and Objective 4 relates to Environmental Sustainability.
- 4.2. While Objective 4 and Policies 4.1 - 4.3 address environmental and emissions targets, there is little detail around what specific actions will be taken to achieve this objective.

¹⁰ Page 19

¹¹ For example, Shepherds Creek Hut bridge resilience project which is included in QLDCs National Land Transport Plan 2024 – 2027.

- 4.3. When considering alternative public transport options, QLDC would like to see further research into the use of electric ferries included as a possibility. For areas like Queenstown, there is potential for reducing single occupancy vehicles, traffic congestion and emissions reduction by servicing key parts of the district with an enhanced ferry service.
- 4.4. QLDC also supports further investigation into inter and intra-regional public transport services.
- 4.5. Figure 6¹² is a key diagram in relation to transport emissions, however it is important to note that transport is the main contributor to emissions in the QLD. This highlights the importance of planning and delivery, Travel Demand Management and mode shift away from private vehicles to other modes such as walking, cycling or public transport.
- 4.6. QLDC supports the importance of active travel use in the region as described in the RLTP.
- 4.7. QLDC supports the importance of public transport in the region and recognition of the issues with delivery of a public transport service in smaller townships.
- 4.8. Recommendations:
 - 4.8.1. The RLTP provide more detail on what specific actions will be required to achieve Objective 4 and Policies 4.1 - 4.3.

5. The roading network provides extensive means of access across Otago and Southland.

- 5.1. Table 8 – Community at Risk Register 2022 for Otago and Southland represents data at 2022. QLDC believe that representing data as changes over time (in years) would further emphasise the impact of funding over time. The Strategic Road Network heading of the document should further explain the data in the table and highlight the key areas for investment. For example, QLDs collective risk for accidents involving cyclists is 2. Therefore, investment in safe infrastructure on the cycling network will contribute to a reduction in this figure.
- 5.2. QLDC supports the inclusion of inter-regional and connections and strategic corridors. However, further breakdown is required that highlights roads such as the Crown Range as a key route. Other important resilience networks in the QLD region to note are the roads to Glenorchy and Kinloch, that have no alternate routes available. These examples emphasise the importance of delivering preventative maintenance works.
- 5.3. QLDC supports the inclusion of airports as being integral to our region. Further emphasis could be included with regard to the importance of the Queenstown airport as the main access point to Aotearoa New Zealand's premier tourist district.
- 5.4. Recommendations
 - 5.4.1. That a more detailed explanation of how further investment in specific road safety topic areas will contribute to a reduction in personal risk (deaths and serious injuries) on our network.

- 5.4.2. That the district's strategic corridors include reference to the Crown Range Road, and that the roads between Glenorchy and Kinloch be recognised and provided for within the RLTP, noting that they allow critical connections between the district's communities and support economic activity (as key tourist routes).
- 5.4.3. The significant connections (nationally and internationally) enabled by the Queenstown Airport be recognised and provided for within the RLTP, including its role as a critical gateway into the district and entire South Island.

6. QLDC requests updates to table 14 – ‘10-year Forecasts of Revenue and Expenditure for Otago’.

- 6.1. QLDC requests updates to tables 14¹³ and 16¹⁴ – ‘10-year Forecasts of Revenue and Expenditure for Otago’ as below. QLDC would also like to note that that LTP24 continues to be reviewed and updated. The below represents the most up to date iteration (March 24).
- 6.2. QLDC request that Waka Kotahi NZTA State Highways Otago allocate funding in the Investment Management Activity (002) for a new multi modal district Transport Model. This is a shared model between QLDC, ORC and Waka Kotahi NZTA, and is a key tool to ensure any investment in the future transport system is effective and efficient and supports economic growth and productivity.
- 6.3. Recommendations
 - 6.3.1. That tables 14 and 16 be updated as noted below¹⁵ (~~strikethroughs~~ represent recommended deletions and underlines represent recommended additions)
 - 6.3.2. That the RLTP allocate funding in the Investment Management Activity (002) for a new multi modal district Transport Model.

¹³ Page 47

¹⁴ Page 52

¹⁵ Note – There have been multiple budget changes compared to QLDCs National Land Transport Plan 2024 inputs to Waka Kotahi NZTA. However, many of these are not significant. The updates shown above in tables 14 and 16 represent only **major** budget changes that have occurred.

Table 16: Otago Region: Prioritised Improvement Activities

Activity Name	Phase	Description	Cost 24/25	Cost 25/26	Cost 26/27	Total Cost 24-27 NLT	Total Cost for 2024-30 RLTP	Total Cost for 10 years	Source	RLTP Objective	RLTP Priority	Regional Priority
Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC)												
Arthurs Point Bridge Pre – Implementation - The existing single lane Edith Cavell Bridge at Arthur's Point is the sole crossing of the Shotover River on the route between Arrowtown and Queenstown (the only alternative route for SH6A). The heritage listed bridge was constructed in 1919 and is indicated to fail catastrophically in a major earthquake event. The bridge services between 4,500 and 8,000 vehicle movements per day depending on the time of year.												
^	Pre-Implementation	^	0	954,006	1,945,434\$ 1,118,563	7,538,642\$ 1,118,563	7,538,642\$2 5,597,359	7,538,642\$2 9,562,955		3	1&3	4
^	Implementation	^	0	0	0	0	37,749,869	61,136,576		3	1&3	4
Capell Avenue Road Formation - Hawea is a rapidly growing township. The environment court has recently approved a significant extension to the Urban Growth Boundary south of Cemetery Road. The extension of Capell Ave (following unformed legal road) will facilitate a critical multi modal connection between the established township and the newly developing area to the south. This will support safe and equitable access to education, social, and commercial facilities. There is a time limited opportunity to align formation of this road with the installation of a planned water supply main												
^	SSBC Lite	^	100,00			100,00	100,00	100,00		3	1&2	28
^	Implementation	^	906,558 826,190	2,466,921 \$2,394,802		3,373,479 \$3,220,992	3,373,479 \$3,220,992	3,373,479 \$3,220,992		3	1&2	28
Shepherds Creek Hut Bridge Resilience - Following a significant rainfall event in April 2022, a debris flow event was triggered in the Shepherds Hut Creek catchment. This event resulted in blockage of the culvert and subsequent over topping of the culvert which passes beneath the Glenorchy-Queenstown Road. The event caused water and debris to flood the road resulting in a total loss of service for 36 hours. The subject site has a history of debris flow occurrence. The previous significant event was July 2018.												
^	SSBC Lite	^		171,046		171,046	171,046	171,046		2&4	1	19
^	Implementation	^		\$170,551	2,005,607 \$1,999,810	2,005,607 \$2,170,362	2,005,607 \$2,170,362	2,005,607 \$2,170,362		2&4	1	19
*Bennetts Bluff Resilience – Glenorchy-Queenstown Road is a critical route to access the communities at the Head of Lake Wakatipu, and there is no alternative. The route is at high risk from geohazards, particularly slope and rock instability. there have been a number of events at the Bennett's Bluff site.												
Δ	Implementation	Δ	\$103,500	\$106,595		\$210,095	\$210,095	\$210,095		2&4	3	34
*Crown Range Slope Resilience – The Crown Range is a key tourist route that connects the two main town centres in the district (Wanaka and Queenstown). It contributes significantly our districts economic and social well being and provide an alternative access to the state highway for connecting these communities. It is NZ's highest sealed public road. The risk of slope failure is a significant resilience issue.												
Δ	Implementation	Δ	\$414,000	\$426,379		\$840,379	\$840,379	\$840,379		2&4	1	19

*The above Bennetts Bluff and Crown Range Slope Resilience projects have been added to or LCLR bid for the NLTP24 bid and therefore are not required to be included in table 16: Prioritised Improvement Activities