



28 May 2021

Via email: RPTP2021@orc.govt.nz

Dear Sir / Madam,

SUBMISSION ON THE DRAFT REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT PLAN (RPTP)

Thank you for providing QLDC with the opportunity to present this submission. Officers have participated in the development of the strategic direction of the document but welcome the opportunity to provide further detailed feedback.

Broadly speaking, the QLDC supports the direction of the RPTP, but is keen to understand the means by which this will now be funded and implemented. There are a number of public transport trials proposed within this plan for the district, which is extremely welcome. As a high-growth urban area, it is apparent that the provision of effective public transport in the district will need to extend to Wanaka and the Upper Clutha in the near future.

Public transport is a core component of the QLDC's Draft Spatial Plan. As this work progresses, QLDC requests that ORC's public transport plans align with the Spatial Plan more effectively. Without this alignment, the district will struggle to 'grow well' and meet its aspirations for future generations. Transformational change cannot be achieved through traditional, demand-led models. A paradigm-shift will be needed, that moves the development of zero-emission public transport into a position of leadership – 'build it and they will come'.

As New Zealand's premier international visitor destination, public transport is key to the visitor experience. In this regard, the ORC holds a critical responsibility that must not be underestimated. The ORC's input to the Destination Management Plan being prepared with the Regional Tourism Organisations will be essential.

QLDC recommends that the ORC makes a stronger commitment to the need for zero-emission public transport across the region. Given the commitment made by the government in January 2021 to only purchase zero-emission buses by 2025, to decarbonise public transport by 2035 and to support regional councils through a \$50m fund, it's recommended that this is provided with far more clarity in the RPTP. QLDC has taken this opportunity to also comment on the RPTP with regards to inter-regional, sub-regional and districtwide public transport provisions.

QLDC wishes to appear before the committee to speak to its submission. It should be noted that this submission reflects the position of officers and has not yet been ratified by full council.

Yours faithfully



Mike Theelen
Chief Executive

1.0 Strategic Direction

- 1.1 QLDC broadly supports the strategic intent of the RPTP and thanks the ORC for the involvement of QLDC officers in aspects of its development. The RPTP reinforces the content and priority of some of the district's programmes.
- 1.2 Queenstown is New Zealand's premier international visitor destination and how our visitors move around our district is an important part of the visitor experience. In this regard, the ORC holds a critical responsibility that must not be underestimated, but this does not appear to have been addressed in the RPTP and recommends that amendments are made to acknowledge this important economic aspect.
- 1.3 QLDC notes that the ORC's input to the Destination Management Plan being preparing with the Regional Tourism Organisations will be essential. Officers will provide further advice in relation to this timelines in due course.
- 1.4 QLDC supports the vision of the RPTP (p8) but would like to see greater emphasis on emissions reduction and the inclusion of resilience and general wellbeing as important aspects.

"Inclusive, accessible, and innovative public transport that connects Otago, emits zero-emissions and contributes positively to community wellbeing, visitor experience and resilience."

- 1.5 QLDC seeks greater clarification as to how the sound aspirations of the plan will be achieved. There is little detail within the document provided as to how the approach will be funded, co-ordinated or delivered at a local level.
- 1.6 There are a number of issues in the draft RPTP that need to be addressed. These will be set out within the following sections:
 - Emission Reduction and Behaviour Change
 - Spatial Plan Alignment
 - Inter-Regional and Sub-Regional Connectivity
 - Districtwide Connectivity
 - Additional Points

2.0 Emission Reduction and Behaviour Change

The RPTP needs to take a far stronger stance in relation to emission reduction, committing firmly to behaviour change and traffic management programmes that significantly reduce the use of private personal vehicles..

- 2.1 Transport is the highest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the district, with 37% of all emissions attributable to road transport¹. Without the provision of excellent public transport, the district will not be able to achieve the levels of mode shift and behavioural change required to reduce these emissions.

¹ <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/media/qyyn4f4d/qldc-2019-ghg-inventory-report.pdf> p4

- 2.2 QLDC notes that much of the language relating to emission reduction in the RPTP is cautious and understands that the cost implications may be significant. QLDC strongly encourages the adoption of a bold and definitive stance on the transition to zero-emission public transport services in the district.
- 2.3 Given the commitment made by the government in January 2021 to only purchase zero-emission buses by 2025, to decarbonise public transport by 2035 and to support regional councils through a \$50m fund², it's recommended that this is provided with far more clarity in the RPTP.
- 2.4 With the bus network at an early stage in its development in the Wakatipu and a clear need for the provision of a service in the Upper Clutha, ORC is being presented with a unique opportunity to deliver a zero-emissions solution in the Queenstown Lakes District. Rather than relying on the traditional, demand-led model for development, QLDC urges the ORC to build zero-emissions public transport that is ahead of demand. This will provide a fast pathway to transformational change.
- 2.5 A fundamental change in the provision of public transport will be essential for Otago to meet the requirements of the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019. QLDC encourages the ORC to trial new approaches and take fast steps to inspire mode shift through well-designed behavioural change programmes and traffic management schemes in the Queenstown Lakes District. Given the district contains a collection of smaller urban centres, it offers the ideal environment to trial new zero-emission models and technologies.
- 2.6 The RPTP needs to place far more emphasis on the need for effective behaviour change. Mode shift will require a disciplined, structured approach to behaviour change that challenges fundamental social norms in many parts of the region. Shifting the paradigm away from reliance on personal private vehicles will require significant expertise, tools, funding, regulation and resources. Investment will be required into strategic and non-infrastructure solutions and comprehensive tools for change need to be developed. The importance of behaviour change needs far greater amplification and emphasis throughout the RPTP, exploring methodology, approach and timeline.
- 2.7 Public transport offers the opportunity for a step-change in emissions reduction if designed well. The opportunities are particularly pronounced at the early stage of a development, establishing public transport as a preferred option before mode preference for private personal vehicle usage has become embedded. QLDC is keen to continue to work closely with the ORC to help shape and develop the provision of public transport in the district at pace, in order to reduce emissions, build resilience and improve community wellbeing.
- 2.8 QLDC currently faces a significant energy challenge in the district in relation to capacity and resilience. This is something that the ORC needs to be fully aware of in transitioning to zero-emission public transport. QLDC welcomes the opportunity to partner with ORC in understanding the parameters of this challenge.

² <https://www.transport.govt.nz/area-of-interest/environment-and-climate-change/public-transport-decarbonisation/>

- 2.9 The line servicing Queenstown is nearing current capacity³, with a number of operational and other enhancement solutions either underway or in the planning phase with Transpower, Aurora and Powernet. Whilst this may provide additional capacity in the short – medium term, it does not address the resilience of the line long term
- 2.10 The current network also lacks resilience, with one spur line providing power through the Kawarau Gorge to Queenstown (Transpower) and two single lines from Cromwell to Wanaka (Aurora). Queenstown is one of the largest population and economic centres served by a single spur line.
- 2.11 The QLDC declared a climate and ecological emergency in 2019 and invites the ORC to lean into the challenge of emissions reduction through the provision of zero-emission public transport and behavioural change programmes. Consideration should be given to share schemes for e-bikes and other micro-transport options.
- 2.12 The region looks to the ORC to provide strong leadership in relation to emissions reduction through zero-emission public transport provisions.

3.0 Spatial Plan Alignment

ORC's Public Transport provisions need to be fully integrated with the Queenstown Lakes District Spatial Plan.

- 3.1 Places succeed and perform best when central and local governments work together with iwi, business, industry and the community to deliver a shared vision for their community. The Whaiora / Grow Well Partnership is a new Urban Growth Partnership between Central Government, Kāi Tahu, and the Queenstown Lakes District Council.
- 3.2 QLDC notes that the ORC has joined the QLDC spatial plan partnership fully for the next process in 2023/24. QLDC recommends the ORC ensures that sufficient resources and budget are available to support effective input into the development of the next spatial plan and its associated data sources.
- 3.3 The partnership provides a forum to align decision-making and collaborate on the long-term direction for the Queenstown Lakes District. It acknowledges that the Queenstown Lakes District is facing complex, growth-related challenges across housing, transport and the environment that may have flow-on effects nationally, particularly given the importance of the Queenstown Lakes area to New Zealand's tourism sector.
- 3.4 The Draft Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan sets out the partnership's long-term approach to address these challenges, in support of the communities' Vision Beyond 2050. It is governed by three principles and five outcomes. Effective, zero-emission public transport is a core component in the delivery of every outcome. The centrality of an effective RPTP to the success of the Spatial Plan cannot be underestimated.

³Transpower's 2020 Transmission Planning Report, section 19.4.2.4, page 303-4. "Peak load at Frankton is forecast to exceed the n-1 winter thermal capacity of the 110kV Cromwell-Frankton circuits from 2021"
<https://www.transpower.co.nz/sites/default/files/publications/resources/TPR%202020.pdf>

GOAL		Whaiora Grow Well			
PRINCIPLES	HAUORA WELLBEING	AUMANGEA RESILIENCE	WHAKAUKU SUSTAINABILITY		
	Decisions about growth recognise social, economic, environmental and cultural considerations	Ensuring communities and visitors are resilient to shocks of the future, including adapting to climate change	Programmes and activities are delivered according to sustainable development principles and work towards zero emissions		
SPATIAL ELEMENTS: Illustrate how and where the area will grow					
OUTCOMES	Consolidated growth and more housing choice	Public transport, walking and cycling are everyone's first travel choice	A sustainable tourism system	Well-designed neighbourhoods that provide for everyday needs	A diverse economy where everyone can thrive

3.5 The RPTP is currently too cautious and hesitant in relation to the need for effective, zero-emissions public transport across the Queenstown Lakes District. Without greater innovation and investment on the part of the ORC, the aspirations of the district will not be achieved.

3.6 As outlined in 2.5.5, QLDC encourages ORC to continue to seek funding for investment in the district, with a particular emphasis on increasing and improving the provision for the district in alignment with the priority development areas outlined in the Spatial Plan. Without this commitment, the district will not be able to plan effectively for growth in a manner that improves community wellbeing.

3.7 The RPTP does not demonstrate a clear understanding of the QLDC Draft Spatial Plan and the challenges of growth in the district at present. A few key corrections to note:

- The Spatial Plan is not limited to the Wakatipu, it addresses the whole district (6.6.1).
- The Spatial Plan addresses the next 30 years, not the next 40 years (6.6.1).
- The population is anticipated to grow to 78,000 by 2048, not 66,000 (2.2.3.)
- References to visitors should also address those arriving into the district by road, as this represents the majority.

3.8 It should also be noted that QLDC has partnered with the Regional Tourism Organisations to begin the development of a Destination Management Plan for the district, as an output from the Draft Spatial Plan. In the near future, QLDC will work with the ORC to understand its role in the process with regard to public transport.

4.0 Inter-Regional and Sub-Regional Connectivity

4.1 QLDC recommends a far stronger emphasis on the need for inter-regional public transport connectivity. The provision of this structure is essential to reducing reliance on personal private vehicle usage and offering affordable travel across the region. This is

particularly important given the lack of social and healthcare services available within the district. Travel to Invercargill and Dunedin for hospital services is typical.

- 4.2 At a sub-regional level, key connections required are Upper Clutha – Cromwell – Wakatipu. This needs urgent consideration in advance of the potential development of the Tarras airport, which could have significant implications for volumes of personal private / rental vehicles on the district’s roads.

5.0 Districtwide Public Transport

- 5.1 The strategic direction of the plan is sound, but there is a lack of investment in the Queenstown Lakes District. This puts pressure on the service levels being offered and places delivery and community satisfaction at risk.
- 5.2 Personal private transport, congestion, parking, active travel and public transport are critical factors in the ability for our communities to have a high quality of life and a good standard of general wellbeing. Lack of investment in the district results in increased stress, time poverty, less active living and threatens community connections.
- 5.3 QLDC’s 2020 Quality of Life survey highlighted that less than half of respondents felt that public transport was accessible for their needs, while even fewer felt that it meets the needs of all residents. Planning for further investment is needed⁴.
- 5.4 QLDC strongly supports the initiatives outlined at 2.6.1.2 as trial initiatives for the district, particularly the Upper Clutha – Cromwell- Wakatipu commuter route and the trial of services to rural centres e.g. Glenorchy, Luggate, Makarora and Kingston.
- 5.5 QLDC also strongly recommends the reinstatement of the Arrowtown – Arthurs Point connection and the public transport integration with high volume tourism activities e.g. ski fields.
- 5.6 QLDC continues to support the development of ferry services as a future public transport option for the Wakatipu.
- 5.7 QLDC notes that through the Way 2 Go workstreams, ORC is planning a \$1.5m Detailed Business Case for public transport services across the Wakatipu. It is strongly recommended that this work is expanded to address the needs of the whole District, and its key regional connections concurrently.
- 5.8 The district has a high appetite for the provision of active transport options that complement and complete many public transport journeys. These should be considered as part of the zero-emissions public transport picture.
- 5.9 Ongoing, QLDC advises that the ORC take a collaborative approach to the development of new routes and services in the district, working with communities to ensure appropriate design.

⁴ <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/community/community-research#quality-of-life> p72

6.0 Additional Points

- 6.1 The objectives listed are supported by QLDC, but some minor wording changes are recommended for clarity;
- Objective One – “Contribute to carbon emissions reduction... “
 - Objective Two – Consider splitting into two objectives, as it addresses a broad selection of outcomes
 - Objective Three – “Develop a public transport system that is adaptable and resilient. ~~able to effectively respond to change~~”
- 6.2 Section 2.2.3 references the now superseded National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity and should be replaced with the correct reference.
- 6.3 Throughout the document, the ORC references QLDC’s demand projections and Statistics New Zealand numbers in a number of different formats. Application of a more consistent approach is recommended.
- 6.4 It should be noted that in section 3.3, a contributing factor to the local increase in bus patronage was also due to the contemporaneous changes to QLDC’s parking restrictions and pricing.
- 6.5 Greater clarification is required as to the best mechanism for the provision of park and ride facilities, dedicated bus lanes and frequency of bus stops.