

Lay evidence of Stuart Victor in support of the submission by Stuart Victor (Submitter 89)

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I am presenting this lay evidence in support of my own submission (89). I'm speaking as both a resident and a member of the tourism industry for over 25 years.

The key points I wish to make in this evidence are that:

1. It will be a huge mistake to rezone this land as it's simply the wrong location to see development and I think it must be kept Rural.
2. A QLDC survey shows 86% of the community opposing the development but this has been ignored.
3. The 42A Report only addresses Traffic Effects as a Sub-theme (Section 11.38). Traffic is actually the main concern of Queenstown residents. The traffic issues are not adequately addressed in the report or in the evidence of Colin Shields and Tony Pickard.

In this evidence, I wish to respond to various specific points in the council's evidence which supports the s 42A report

Council's transport evidence

Tony Pickard's evidence

In Tony Pickard's Evidence he states the following:

"Way to Go (W2G) Partnership - Section 11:

The Queenstown package of the New Zealand Upgrade Programme (NZUP) is also a product of this collaboration and will see physical works adjacent to the TPLM Variation site, namely the SH6/Howards Drive roundabout and SH6 westbound bus lane."

...

“Ladies Mile Transport Strategy

13 I would stress that the strategy’s success is dependent on the wider programme being implemented and as such is consequently not in the sole control of QLDC. This Transport Strategy will not solve the corridor or network wide issues, such as capacity of the Shotover Bridge

(c) Mitigating the potential levels of traffic generation by providing mode alternatives to the private car.”

In response, from my observations and understanding of the existing traffic issues and scale of development that will be enabled by the variation:

- A new roundabout on SH6 at Howards Drive will not help improve current or future traffic flows. You can see this does not resolve the traffic issues at the Shotover Country roundabout several hundred metres along SH6 where a bottle neck already occurs.
- The addition of a bus lane of approximately 750 metres in length will have minimal benefits as there is one major flaw with this; that being that the local school and urban buses already get stuck with the current traffic levels within Lake Hayes and Shotover Country. From my observations, it often takes 45 minutes or more just to get out of Lake Hayes Estate/Shotover Country in a bus or car and physically on to Ladies Mile and only then will the buses be able to utilise this very short bus lane before it has to merge on to the Shotover Bridge with all the other backed-up traffic.

Colin Sheild’s evidence

In his evidence, Mr Sheild makes the following statement:

“Transport Strategy - Key findings

Existing Transport Conditions

21 - (d) AM peak period queues westbound (towards Frankton) block back from Shotover Bridge typically up to the SH6/Howards Drive intersection. Queues also block back on Stalker Road typically to the primary school and on Howards Drive typically to Jones Avenue.”

From my observations and experience:

- From my experience, the traffic jams actually extend beyond the Sylvan Street/Howards Drive roundabout, within Lake Hayes Estate, with traffic at a standstill or barely moving.

- The majority of traffic is people going to work as most businesses are located in Frankton or Queenstown.
- So many of the vehicles are from tradies and construction workers whom cannot take public transport with their equipment. Residents and visitors need to cross the Shotover Bridge for work, shopping, and leisure in Frankton or Queenstown. The proposed approximately 750 metre long bus lane won't help the traffic flow and I am concerned that this seems to be the main solution proposed to address the traffic issue.
- Ladies Mile is a state highway that we need to keep flowing for residents, thousands of visitors in rental vehicles, tour buses, freight trucks, and emergency services. Up to 10,000 more residents will effectively cripple state highway 6 and result in people no longer wanting to live or visit here. It will cause stress, negatively affect the economy, due to people missing flights, appointments, meetings, and wasting productive time. I am even aware of high school students missing their exams and being late for school with the existing traffic levels when riding the school bus.
- Adding 10,000 more residents will not improve the traffic. furthermore, the annual summer road works on the Shotover Bridge has not been taken into consideration and this makes traffic 100 times worse.
- There are still growing numbers of commuters and visitors driving from Wanaka, Cromwell, Alexandra, Dunedin, Tekapo, Christchurch, the west coast etc. that all have a basic need and expectation to be able to drive on this highway to Frankton, the airport, and Queenstown, with minimal traffic issues.

In his evidence, Mr Sheilds makes the following statement:

“Comprehensive Parking Management Plan

15 In the case of the TPLM Variation area, reducing provision of free public parking will help discourage ownership and use of private cars.”

In response, from my observations and experience, so much of our region is only accessible by private car as it is so spread out and is geographically unique compared to cities. Therefore, it is unrealistic to believe residents/visitors will not want to own/rent a car.

In his evidence, Mr Sheild makes the following statement:

“25 It is acknowledged that ideally all transport infrastructure and services should be in place at the earliest opportunity but with the current affordability issues amongst transport partners this may not be possible.” (my emphasis added)

In response, I consider this to be a very uncertain statement. I want to make sure that IF this development is approved, which I am still positive it shouldn't, then these “specific transport infrastructural works” also need to be proven to work and are actually functioning for the community before any development takes place. For the reasons outlined earlier in my evidence, I am worried that this dream of a modal shift for all Shotover Country, LHE, and residents in the proposed development, is too far-fetched and unrealistic.

In his evidence, Mr Sheild makes the following statement:

“Key transport policy and strategy documents

22 (b) “Making shared and active modes more attractive – improving the quality of public transport and facilities for walking and cycling will enable people to use them.”

In response, from my observations and experience, a fundamental issue here is that we have ice and snow to contend with in autumn, winter and spring, during which people will not wish to cycle or walk in this weather.

Conclusion:

I've been a manager in the tourism industry for over 25 years and what we have in Queenstown is so special and it will no longer be an appealing place to visit with worsening traffic. It is already a real challenge moving tourists around the region. E.g. getting groups from the Hilton out to the Bungy Bridge for dinner can take close to an hour instead of 20 minutes and will only get worse. We have companies flying into Queenstown from the USA for a week on incentive/reward trips and their number one comment to us is that the traffic is terrible and they are stressed that they're late for their activities and dinners etc.

We need to protect this special entrance to Queenstown for future generations of residents and visitors to cherish and realise that visitors come here to escape their overcrowded stressful cities and this development will diminish our ability to continue to provide that experience. The development will result in no one wanting to live or visit here if they cannot move about the area freely.

I am concerned that there appears to be no backup plan when this high-density development cripples Queenstown, and note that it can't be undone once its established and hoping for a modal shift to mitigate the effects of increased arising from the variation is just unrealistic.

There are also existing areas already zoned for high density, close to existing amenities and, while I understand that the panel cannot do anything to force the development of those, it makes much more sense for these to be utilised before zoning additional land for development. E.g. the land next to the existing high school, New World Supermarket/Remarkables Park shops/commercial area in Frankton.