

ORC Transport feedback on the RCL Homestead Bay Fast-track application

As per Land Transport Management Act 2003, ORC's responsibilities as the public transport authority for Otago include:

- Planning public transport networks
- Designing, procuring and funding public transport services
- Influencing land use via regional policy statements and regional plans developed in accordance with the Resource Management Act 1991

In fulfilling these responsibilities, ORC has an interest in the RCL Homestead Bay fast-track application (the Project) as an urban expansion development which will generate significant transport demand and require investment in public transport infrastructure and services. Accordingly, we have assessed the Project's alignment with the following strategic planning and investment documents:

- Otago Regional Council Strategic Directions 2024-2034
- Otago Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035 (RTP)
- Otago Southland Regional Land Transport Plans 2021-2031 (2024 mid-term review)
- Proposed Otago Regional Policy Statement 2021 (pORPS)
- Queenstown Public Transport Business Case (endorsed by the Way to Go transport partners, QLDC, NZTA Waka Kotahi and ORC, in 2024)

We offer the following transport-related feedback on the Project. All application content has been considered with focus on the Urban Design Assessment (Appendix O), Landscape Design (Appendix P), Transport Assessment (Appendix V) and Transport Analysis Summary (Appendix GG).

Executive summary

The Project partially provides for the public transport network's current services and future improvements. ORC identifies the following inconsistencies between the Project and key public transport plans and policies. Without the applicant resolving these inconsistencies, ORC transport staff cannot conclude that the Project is aligned with the future public transport network and level of service as set out in strategic planning documents:

- While the scale of the development is such that it should be viable for public transport services, the Project does not provide sufficient housing density or land use diversity to guarantee the affordable provision of high frequency public transport services beyond the high-density mixed-use spine.
- The Project does not adequately contribute to the mitigation of poor public transport performance on State Highway 6 (SH6) resulting from travel demand exceeding capacity.

- The connectivity between the Project and the future Homestead Bay Village would not provide residents good access to key destinations nor to any potential future public transport ferry to Queenstown Town Centre.
- The roading and bus stop infrastructure designs need to accommodate the larger bus size to which ORC plans to upgrade in the medium-term.

1. Land use and transport integration to enable affordable provision of frequent public transport

ORC's urban form and land use development policies set out our commitment to integrating land use and transport to support the development of well-functioning urban environments, defined in the National Policy Statement for Urban Development 2020 (NPS-UD). The proposed Otago Regional Policy Statement (pORPS) *UFD-P1(1A)*, *UFD-P4(1)* and *UFD-P4(1B)* policies highlight the importance of land use and transport integration to achieve consolidated, well designed and sustainable development. The RPTP *LU P1* policy states our commitment to collaborate with territorial authorities to support developments whose urban form enables viable frequent public transport service provision. RPTP *LU P2* specifies that public transport services sufficient to enable well-functioning urban environments will not be provided where a development's urban form does not make it affordable to do so.

While the Project's high- and medium-density residential and non-residential urban form support viable frequent public transport provision, the high proportion of single-use residential urban form (57% of total dwellings) weaken the public transport performance and in turn delaying the implementation of frequent services. Specifically, the largely low-density single use residential urban form surrounding the loop collector road could reduce the efficiency of this part of the route in generating sufficient patronage to warrant frequent services.

To enable affordable provision of high-quality frequent public transport throughout the Project, we recommend increasing the diversity and/or density of the Project's urban form throughout the site area. This could be achieved through interventions such as adding commercial or mixed-use land use in the areas farthest from the local centre. By reducing the travel distance to small-scale commercial activities (such as dairies, cafés, pharmacies, etc.) for people in the western high-density superblocks and the southern low-density blocks, walking and cycling would be the preferred modes for more trips.

The Project is consistent with the pORPS *UFD-P5* policy in its provision of a local centre that can accommodate "a variety of commercial activities, social, recreational and cultural activities on a scale appropriate to service local community needs."

2. Access to employment and education

Currently the 'Supporting Sustainable Transport Options' project design principles listed in the Landscape Design Document (Appendix P) do not fully meet the NPS-UD policy 1(c) definition of 'well-functioning urban environments'. Despite all principles under these headings aligning with

the definition, the absence of a principle setting out the applicant's commitment to provide "good accessibility for all people between housing [and] jobs [...] including by way of public or active transport" both within and outside the site area renders the design principles inconsistent with the full definition. We acknowledge the Project's site design enables residents commuting within the site area and Southern Corridor to be reasonably well-connected to work and school, but we would like additional measures taken to improve access outside the corridor.

While the Project's provision of commercial and social activities increases the number of jobs in the site area and the QLDC Te Tapuae Southern Corridor Structure Plan sets out intentions to increase jobs throughout the corridor, it is still expected that a large portion of people will commute out of the corridor. The 2023 Census found 59% of Southern Corridor resident workers (1374 people) commute across the Kawarau Falls Bridge to work. School commutes followed the same trend with 60% of resident students (450 people) commuting across the Kawarau Falls Bridge for school. The 1800+ trips across the Kawarau Falls Bridge at peak times in March 2024 illustrated in the Integrated Transport Assessment (Appendix V) Figure 4-3 confirms the increase in out-of-corridor commuters matches the corridor's steady population growth. We note that the Project should take greater consideration of ways to ensure people have good access to jobs and education using sustainable transport modes, both within and outside the site area.

3. Connectivity outside the Southern Corridor

The Project proposes the development of over 2500 residential units, or over 27% of the 9350 total units projected to be built in the Southern Corridor by 2053.¹ As identified in the Transportation Analysis Summary (Appendix GG), demand on SH6 between the Southern Corridor and Frankton is expected to exceed capacity as early as 2026. While this demonstrates the Project would not be primarily responsible for SH6's overcapacity in the short-term, it remains that the Project would be a cumulative and significant contributor to the future growth in trip demand on the SH6. Without taking any measures to improve SH6's performance beyond individual intersection upgrades, the Project is somewhat inconsistent with the ORC Strategic Directions goal of "congestion is reduced and connection is increased throughout the region" and a number of infrastructure, transport, and urban form and development policies contained within the pORPS.

To address the Project's role in SH6 requiring additional capacity to remain functional in the medium- and long-term, we consider that it would be appropriate for the applicant to contribute to the costs of developing a northbound SH6 bus lane to an extent that is proportional to the increased transport demand that will be contributed by this development.

Significant transport investment beyond the bus lane will be required to accommodate the Southern Corridor's growth from NZTA Waka Kotahi, QLDC and ORC. We expect developers such as RCL to appreciate the scale of investment required and contribute accordingly.

4. Connectivity within the Southern Corridor and future potential public transport ferry

¹ QLDC Te Tapuae Southern Corridor Structure Plan (2024)

The Project's proposed urban and landscape design enables most dwelling units to be well-connected to the transport network within the site area. However, much of the site area does not have a direct connection to the future Homestead Bay Village development to the west of the site area, resulting in inefficient routing for public and active transport modes. ORC notes that the Project's road layout would require a bus route to undertake a highly indirect route through the north-west of the site area to connect to Homestead Bay Village.

The Integrated Transport Assessment (Appendix V) indicates that good connectivity to Homestead Bay Village, particularly for public and active transport modes, is important due to the key amenities it will provide as a local centre, but also due to its potential to be served by a future public transport ferry. Future proofing for a Homestead Bay ferry requires direct connection to serve the wider area, not just the immediate walking catchment. An indirect connection would not only significantly increase the cumulative time and distance costs of frequent services, but would worsen the experience for all passengers not boarding or alighting at stops on the diversion.

As such, ORC Transport recommends consideration of whether an additional link to Homestead Bay Village can be made further south in the site area as shown in Figure 1 below. We recognise the topographical constraints on the western boundary of the site area and the value of recreation reserve land, but emphasise that a connection from the south end of Road 05 through recreation reserve Lots 9003 and 9027 to Homestead Bay would enable a significantly more effective bus connection to the ferry. This additional road connection would enable the potential bus route extension to Homestead Bay Village shown in Figure 2 and strengthen the viability of a ferry service by connecting it to the end of the bus route instead of a mid-route diversion.

Enabling good connectivity to this potential new public transport mode would improve the Project's consistency with the following pORPS policies:

- *EIT-TRAN-P21(3)*: the Project will ensure “the opportunity to adapt, upgrade or develop the transport system to meet future transport demand is not compromised”
- *EIT-TRAN-P21(5)*: the Project will “promote[] methods that provide more efficient use of, or reduce reliance on, private motor vehicles, including [...] alternative transport modes,”
- *EIT-TRAN-P22*: the Project will “enable the development of sustainable transport networks that enhance the uptake of new technology and reduce reliance on fossil fuels”

Improving the Project's connectivity to Homestead Bay Village would also align with the *EIT-TRAN-P19(3)* policy setting out the transport system's role in “encouraging [...] improved access to public spaces including [...] lakes.”



Figure 1. Recommended road alignment to Homestead Bay Village (left source: QLDC Te Tapuae Structure Plan, right source: Rough Milne Mitchell Landscape Architects and UrbanShift)



Figure 2. Concept of the potential additional road connection to Homestead Bay Village (as an extension of Option 4 of Appendix V), which would significantly strengthen the viability of a Ferry service by connecting it to the end of the bus route instead of a mid-route diversion (source: Stantec).

5. Future public transport vehicle sizes

Larger buses will be required on the Queenstown network in the medium-term to provide sufficient capacity and meet mode shift targets. The completed and endorsed Queenstown Public Transport Business Case selected articulated buses as the preferred option due to their fast boarding and alighting times, alignment with current legislation and higher capacity than double-deckers. This business case recommends upgrading to larger buses as early as 2030. Although the viability of this timeline is unclear, and we may see double-deckers ahead of articulated buses in

the medium-term, the case remains strong that articulated buses will be the best way to efficiently deliver bus services with a high capacity. We therefore request the road reserves are designed to allow roads to be configured for turning movements for both double-decker and articulated buses.

Future proofing the Project's infrastructure to support larger vehicles and more frequent services is necessary to ensure "the opportunity to adapt, upgrade or develop the transport system to meet future transport demand is not compromised" as per pORPS policy *EIT-TRAN-P21(3)*. Failing to future proof for large vehicles could cause unsafe road conditions but is highly preventable with adjustments to the Project's infrastructure designs.

It is noted that several roads and intersections in Hanleys Farm and Jacks Point currently used by public transport services do not accommodate articulated buses, however, with a combination of route changes and minor intersection upgrades they could. Please refer to the Queenstown Public Transport Business Case - Public Transport Hubs and Infrastructure Advisory Paper for more details.

6. Park and ride

We advise further investigation into park and ride infrastructure as the most efficient use of the high value land adjacent to public transport nodes. Noting its inclusion in the Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan, we recommend this investigation be undertaken as a collaborative process between ORC, QLDC and RCL.

7. Development staging and public transport provision timing

The Subdivision Staging Plan (Appendix Z) shows 792 residential lots will be developed before any commercial development is complete. Staging the commercial development earlier would enable more trips to be self-contained within the corridor.

Regardless of the order in which development is staged, we advise the applicant coordinate with ORC to plan interim public transport routing to enable service provision before the Project's completion. Providing a public transport option early into the Project's development would encourage mode shift and reduce private vehicle use on SH6.

The stage at which ORC provides public transport will be determined by factors including infrastructure provision, internal road connectivity in the Southern Corridor, and ultimately the availability and approval of funding from our Council and NZTA Waka Kotahi.

8. Public transport route alignment

In discussion with the applicant we have accepted the assessment of the high-coverage option recommended by the Integrated Transport Assessment (Appendix V) as a preferred option and agree with the exclusion of options 1 and 3. We note, however, that option 4's sole drawback is its termination in a residential areas and offer the following considerations:

- Although not ideal, residential area termini is not uncommon and can be operationally managed
- This option reduces the number of turnings per round-trip from 10 to 5 in the development area, which would significantly simplify of bus operations and reduce the rate of road deterioration
- Per section 4 of this report, if a viable southern connection to Homestead Bay Village could be made the preferred route option would have a logical extension to a new terminus at a potential future ferry terminal

9. Transport Analysis Summary recommendations

The Transport Analysis Summary (Appendix GG) forecasts underestimate the total trip demand across the Kawarau Falls Bridge. Its projected growth for the Southern Corridor differs from the QLDC Te Tapuae Southern Corridor Structure Plan by some 14-25% (7000-8000 dwellings compared to QLDC's proposed 9350). It also excludes trips generated by Kingston or Kelvin Heights.

Despite its underestimation, the analysis provides valuable assessments of various transport interventions. To enable public transport investment that mitigates traffic congestion along SH6 and the Kawarau Falls Bridge, we support the analysis' following recommendations for the transport network:

- Significant investment across multiple modes, independent of the successful implementation of planned bus service improvements,
- Investigation into the viability of a second Kawarau River bridge. We advocate for future modelling to consider a public and active transport-only bridge
- Development of SH6 Northbound bus lane between Boyd Road and Kawarau Falls Bridge
- Dualling of the SH6 segment between Park Ridge and Boyd Road. ORC Transport recommends future investigation be undertaken on the benefits of this bus priority for mode shift to public transport before converting the interim bus lane into a traffic lane
- Continued consideration of the potential Homestead Bay-Queenstown ferry service in decision-making. ORC Transport supports the proposed development's design consideration of a possible ferry wharf location. If a ferry service was deemed viable, consideration would be given to adjusting the Southern Corridor bus routes to improve connectivity to the service, where possible
- Investigation into the proposed gondola system's significant constraints on realising high patronage and integrating into the existing transport network
- Maximising non-residential land use in the area to reduce trip demand outside the corridor and enable more active transport trips
- Relevant agencies preparing a funding strategy and financial case for the Southern Corridor Transport Infrastructure Improvements

10. Corrections to public transport content

We have identified several inaccuracies in the public transport information cited in the Integrated Transport Assessment (Appendix V) and provide the following corrections:

- As of 30 June 2025, the public transport route serving the Southern Corridor is No. 4 Jacks Point-Arrowtown via Queenstown at a half-hour peak-time frequency and hourly off-peak frequency
- As of 29 September 2025, adult Bee Card fares have increased to \$2.50 and child fares (5 to 12-year-olds) have increased to \$1.50
- As of October 2025, the service does not connect between Hanleys Farm and Jacks Point along Howden Drive/Homestead Bay Road but will be re-routed to do so in the short-term
- The Queenstown Public Transport Business Case preferred future network option is shown in Figure 1, which includes a high frequency route on Malaghans Road

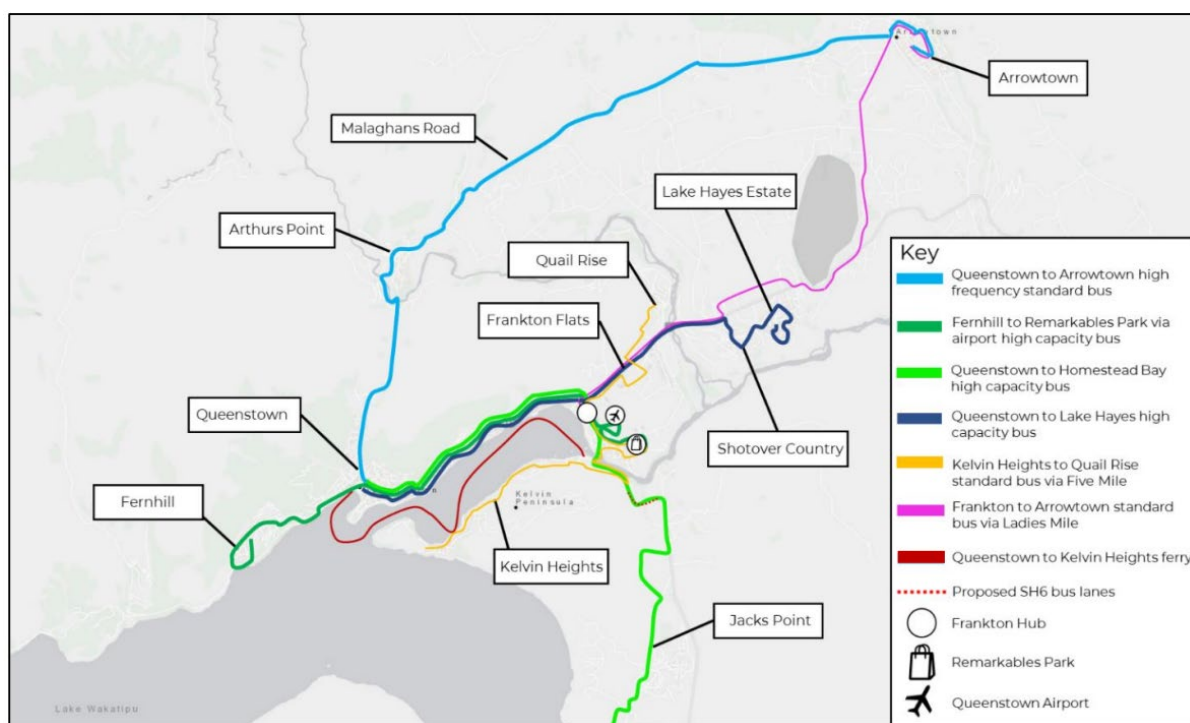


Figure 3. Queenstown Public Transport Business Case Preferred Option

Otago Regional Council Transport Team

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