

26 April 2024

To Whom it May Concern,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission regarding the Otago Regional Council's (ORC) Long Term Plan 2024- 2034.

The Lightfoot Initiative Charitable Trust (Lightfoot) is a charitable trust operating in the Queenstown Lakes District. Lightfoot's focus is to support the development of healthy, safe and sustainable transport networks that connect our community. We advocate for improved public transport, and provide education, events and initiatives to support behaviour change in the resident and visitor populations in the Queenstown Lakes District. As a charitable trust we do not have a membership base, but we work with a diverse audience of 2000 people. We are writing regarding Proposal 2 (Queenstown Lakes) and Proposal 3.

Proposal 2.

Lightfoot supports Option 1, however an increase in funding is needed to ensure the bus and ferry services can fully meet the needs of our communities.

Upgrade the bus fleet – Agree. Additional infrastructure will be needed to ensure this is successful. This will include bus terminals in the Southern Corridor, Ladies Mile and near Arrowtown as growth occurs in the 'commuter belts'. Additional stops on Ladies Mile are also needed as a matter of urgency. In addition, during the period of upgrade, we urge the ORC to increase the frequency of the service.

Earlier and Later – Agree. In addition to this, we urge you to trial a 'Night Bus' operating every hour running from Queenstown to Arrowtown, via the Frankton Bus Hub and Lake Hayes Estate.

Improved timetables and frequency – Partially agree, but with increased frequency of 8 minutes on key routes eg: Number 1. This needs to be actioned as soon as possible, particularly on key routes. An adaptive and data driven approach is needed to ensure that route scheduling reflects what is needed by the community. This cannot wait 10 years as population growth and contextual factors such as the Sh6 NZUP programme will require increased levels of public transport service.

Retain the existing ferry service – Partially agree, an increase to the current service, to include wider coverage and additional ferry stops is needed. Earlier consultations have indicated that a ferry service that provides a higher level of service and coverage would be well used by residents and visitors. We need further investment in this service to better maximise the potential of water-based transport.

On-Demand service – Agree. This is not an immediate area of focus in Queenstown, however progress in Wanaka is needed urgently.

Proposal 3 – transport – disagree

We do not support the proposed change. We urge you to retain the current Capital Value rating system, but believe a higher level of contribution is needed across both commercial and residential Capital Value rates to ensure the public transport system in the Queenstown Lakes is adequately funded to cater to the increased population growth.

We do not support Upper Clutha and Wanaka residents contributing towards the Queenstown bus service.

Final thought

Lightfoot appreciates the investment that has gone into providing the bus service in Queenstown. It is encouraging to see numbers continuing to increase post-Covid-19. Recent changes to the network through adaptations of times and routes, along with an increase in overall reliability across the network, continues to grow public confidence in the service. The \$2 fare ensures that bus use is affordable and accessible to most. The recent proposed changes in the Government Policy Statement on Transport, where cost of travel will be absorbed by the user, with decreased subsidy from government, will have a significant impact in Queenstown. We urge the ORC to avoid fare increases where possible. More community education is needed so the community better understand why the bus service is essential, how their rates are used to subsidise it, and the impact the service has on reducing congestion and emissions.

We would appreciate the opportunity to speak at a hearing if this is possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Amanda Robinson', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Amanda Robinson

General Manager