

Friday, 3 May 2024

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SUBMISSION TO OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL ON ITS DRAFT 2024-34 LONG TERM PLAN

We appreciate the opportunity to present Wānaka Upper Clutha Community Board's (**WUCCB**) submission to the Otago Regional Council (**ORC**) on its draft 2024-34 Long Term Plan (**LTP**). We are also grateful for the one-week extension to the deadline for submissions to Queenstown Lakes District Council (**QLDC**) and associated entities.

Key Points

1. We support QLDC's submission in its entirety.
2. We strongly encourage ORC to plan for and deliver public transport services in the Upper Clutha in Year 4 of the LTP.
3. We do not support the targeted rate portion of transport rates being on a district-wide basis and recommend that such a rate be deferred for the Upper Clutha until such time as it is associated with the provision of a public transport service.
4. We recommend that the targeted rate for the Upper Clutha be deferred and consulted on as part of the next LTP cycle in three years when the community has information around the cost and nature of services proposed.
5. We encourage ORC to be innovative in its provision of public transport services including the substantive use of technology and consideration given to collaborating with private sector interests around funding and service delivery.
6. We would like ORC to pay particular attention to Community Network's submission and the learnings they have gleaned from the two public transport trials conducted in the ward over the past two years.
7. Wānaka's active transport network is evolving quickly and we encourage ORC to recognise this when considering transport solutions for our area. This includes the role active transport can play in the first mile/last mile of journeys and the integration of other forms of personal mobility devices using active transport infrastructure.
8. We strongly support submissions from Wai Wānaka, Guardians of Lake Hāwea and Guardians of Lake Wānaka and echo the need for deep investment into environmental funds.

Elaborated Points

- A. **WUCCB strongly urges ORC to reconsider public transport for Upper Clutha communities.**

The proposed investment in public transport is not supported by WUCCB as it does not include provision for Upper Clutha public transport. There is a strong case for the provision of public transport in the Upper Clutha. Over the past ten years the Upper Clutha has grown at a faster rate than Whakatipu, at 6.2% per annum compared to 5.8%. This theme is projected to continue, with the Upper Clutha predicted to grow at a rate of 3.7% per annum and Whakatipu at 2.2%.

QLDCs Spatial Plan enables growth in Upper Clutha to occur in a way that supports a public transport network, and recognises the need for sub-regional public transport or on demand services. When designing these services, QLDC reiterates an approach that drives behaviour change rather than being demand led.

It is WUCCB's position that no additional trials are needed for the Upper Clutha. Any further work undertaken by ORC should build on the information and data collected in these trials and focus on putting services in place.

It is recommended that ORC work with QLDC towards the commencement of Upper Clutha public transport services in year four of the LTP, and that the service initially focus on transport between Hāwea, Wānaka and Luggate. On demand service in the Wānaka urban area should be considered and is consistent with the findings of trials.

B. The proposed rates impact for transport funding is inequitable and strongly opposed.

WUCCB do not support the targeted rate portion of transport rates being on a district-wide basis. Applying a targeted rate for public transport to areas that do not benefit from having a public transport service is contrary to ORC's approach for targeted rates to be applied in the area of benefit. For example, the rates impact for Upper Clutha residents would equate to approximately \$124 and \$247 per household. Rates increases would also apply to residents in Kingston and Glenorchy. The small benefit that residents outside Queenstown derive from existing public transport services are covered in the general Otago-wide portion of transport rates funding.

It is appropriate for a targeted rate to be applied to Wānaka, Albert Town, Hāwea and Luggate when a public transport service becomes available in these areas (as has been recommended above). It is therefore recommended that the targeted rate be deferred for these communities and be consulted on as part of the next LTP cycle in three years, when the community has information about the cost and nature of the services proposed.

WUCCB considers the Otago-wide rate should be increased above the 20% rate proposed to 30%. This would serve to address the need for ratepayers outside areas serviced by public transport to fund the benefit derived from this service, rather than a targeted rate. QLDC considers that the efficient and effective operation of the transport network within each of Otago's key urban areas should be a priority for all of Otago. Significant benefits for the entire region will be realised if residents, visitors and goods can move freely and without delay. This is particularly relevant to the QLD context and would reflect the contribution of the Queenstown Lakes economy to the wider region. This can be achieved by all of Otago supporting public and active transport across all of the regions key urban centres. Taking a region-wide perspective on such matters is critical.

WUCCB does not support targeted transport rates being charged on a fixed rate in given areas. The preferred option is for no change to public transport rates being determined on a capital value basis, as this is a more equitable reflection of the benefit received. A well-functioning public transport system in Queenstown benefits households, businesses and tourists. The preferred funding

approach is one that shares the cost amongst these parties in an equitable way. QLDC considers it important that a property's contribution is commensurate to the demand it generates and associated benefit it receives from a transport service. Applying public transport contributions on a capital value basis means large businesses will make contributions more in line with the benefits received. For example, a capital value rate will mean a large hotel is paying more than a single dwelling, but also has a much greater number of people that benefit.

More generally however, QLDC is concerned that the use of capital values to determine rates means that QLD property owners contribute a greater share of ORCs rating revenue which is not necessarily reflected in the services provided within the district. A more equitable method for determining rates for the QLD should be considered that is not based solely on capital values.

In addition, as referred to above, other funding options should be considered that enable the visitor economy to contribute to the provision of public transport in the district. This aligns with actions in the district's Regenerative Tourism Plan to encourage visitors to use alternative transport options like public transport. The QLD has an unparalleled ratio of visitors to residents. For the year ending in February 2024 there were 1.7 million guest arrivals in commercial accommodation, which equates to 32 arrivals for every resident. This means that a very small cohort of QLD residents and businesses are funding the vast majority of service and infrastructure needs of visitors.

WUCCB would like to be heard at any hearings that result from this consultation process.

For and on behalf of the WUCCB



Simon Telfer
Chair