[12] URBAN DESIGN ASSESSMENT

QUEENSTOWN CABLE CAR

Memo

To:	Southern Infrastructure (Cable Car) Ltd
From:	Edward Jolly
Date:	31/10/2025
Subject:	Queenstown Cable Car Fast-track Consent Referral – Urban Design Description of Effects

1.0 Introduction

This memo provides the overview and description of urban design effects in regard to the Queenstown Cable Car referral application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (**FTAA**). Specifically, the assessment identifies the anticipated and known adverse effects of the project that would likely arise from an urban design perspective, having particular regard to whether the project will "…contribute to a well-functioning urban environment (within the meaning of policy 1 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020)" (section 22(2)(iii)). A full assessment of the urban design effects will be prepared for the substantive application of the project.

2.0 Geographic scope

The scope of the Urban Design Assessment (**UDA**) includes all areas within the station footprints and cable car corridors as they relate to urban context and associated planning framework, including the National Policy Statement for Urban Development 2020) and relevant local/regional planning documents and spatial strategies. The scope does not include non-urban areas in particular the recreational and rural areas of Queenstown Hill. For these areas the assessment of built environment effects are appropriately covered within the Landscape and Visual Effects Assessment.

3.0 Planning framework

The following planning framework informs the initial urban design description of effects identified in this referral memorandum as well as the urban design assessment required in the substantive application.

National Policy Statement - Urban Development (**NPS-UD**)

The NPS-UD provides high level national direction to enable delivery of sufficient development capacity to meet both residential and business needs over the short to long term. The NPS-UD recognises the national significance of having "well-functioning urban environments" that enable all people and communities to provide for their social, economic, and cultural wellbeing, and for their health and safety, now and into the future. It provides high level national direction around the provision of sufficient development capacity to meet the different needs of people and communities.

The key aspects of consideration from an urban design perspective that contribute to well-functioning urban environments are stated in Policy 1 of the NPS-UD:

> *(a) have or enable a variety of homes that:*
>
> > *(i) meet the needs, in terms of type, price, and location, of different households; and*
> >
> > *(ii) enable Māori to express their cultural traditions and norms; and*
>
> *(b) have or enable a variety of sites that are suitable for different business sectors in terms of location and site size;*

(c) have good accessibility for all people between housing, jobs, community services, natural spaces, and open spaces, including by way of public or active transport;

(d) support, and limit as much as possible adverse impacts on, the competitive operation of land and development markets; and

(e) Support reduction in green house emissions and

(f) are resilient to the likely current and future effects of climate change.

The Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan 2021 (**QLSP**)

The QLSP sets out a vision and framework for how and where the communities of Wakatipu and Upper Clutha can 'grow well' and develop out to 2050 to ensure community wellbeing and prosperity. This is to ensure strong urban form relationships that closely integrates land use, transport and built form, so that future growth happens in the right place and is supported by the right infrastructure.

Relevant strategies outlined in the QLSP include:

*5. Ensure land use is **concentrated, mixed and integrated with transport***

*7. Prioritise investment in **public transport and active mode networks***

*10. Promote a **car free destination***

*11. Create **well-connected neighbourhoods** for healthy communities*

*12. Design to **grow well***

*16. Establish **efficient and resilient connections***

A key outcome sought by the QLSP is to achieve "public transport, walking and cycling is the preferred option for daily travel".

QLDC District Plan

The project covers both urban and rural land under the district plan, reflected in the Proposed District Plan (**PDP**) over a range of zones. This document focuses on the strategic objectives and policies covered in Part Two : Strategy of the PDP (specifically chapter 3 and 4). The substantive submission will focus on the zone related policy and provisions in Part 3 : Urban Environment of the plan.

Chapter 3 of the PDP sets out the Strategic Direction for the plan and Chapter 4 covers Urban Development. These are both important considerations for this referral application. Chapter 3 provides the *"over-arching strategic direction for the **sustainable management of growth**, land use and development in the district",* including providing "***compact and connected settlements** that encourage **public transport, biking and walking**".*

Chapter 4 – Urban Development – "*elaborates on the strategic direction in Chapter 3 and set out the objectives and policies for managing the **spatial location and layout of urban development** within the District". This chapter guides planning and decision making for urban growth and development within the District. It gives effect to the NPS-UD within the plan. This chapter "provides the strategic planning framework to achieve **effective and efficient urban environments** that can meet demand for the development of land for housing and businesses"*

*The objectives and policies for Urban Development provide a framework for a managed approach to urban development that utilises land and resources in an efficient manner, and preserves and enhances natural amenity values. The approach seeks to achieve **integration between land use, transportation, infrastructure**, services, open space networks, community facilities and education; and increases the **viability and vibrancy** of urban areas.*

The key objectives from chapter 4 that relate to urban design effects are:

***4.2.2A Objective - A compact, integrated and well designed urban form** within the Urban Growth Boundaries that:*

i. is coordinated with the efficient provision, use and operation of infrastructure and services; and

ii. is managed to ensure that the Queenstown Airport is not significantly compromised by the adverse effects of incompatible activities.

***4.2.2.3** Enable an **increased density of well-designed residential development in close proximity to town centres**, **public transport routes**, community and education facilities, while ensuring development is consistent with any structure plan for the area and responds to the character of its site, the street, open space and surrounding area.*

***4.2.2.4** Encourage **urban development that enhances connections** to public recreation facilities, reserves, open space and active transport networks*

4.2.2.9** Ensure Council-led and private design and development of public spaces and built development maximises public safety by adopting **"Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design".

4.2.2.21** Ensure that development within the Te Pūtahi Ladies Mile Zone provides for: (a.) an urban development with a strong community identity and sense of place by enabling community activities, including education activities, a commercial centre that meets needs of local residents, and connections to the surrounding landscape and residential communities (d.) **reduced reliance on travel by private vehicle through promotion of public and active transport

4.0 Discussion of urban design effects

NPS- Urban Development

In general, the proposed cable car development aligns well with the NPS-UD in terms of development that results in well-functioning urban environments. The project has a direct relationship to deliver against Policy 1 well-functioning urban environments specifically (c) by providing enhanced accessibility for people by way of public transport and(e) the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through a reduction in vehicle use.

While the project is not focused on delivering residential or commercial development directly it does have the effect of facilitating growth through enhanced accessibility which has the potential to open up further urban intensification opportunities within and around the existing Queenstown and Frankton and future Ladies Mile urban areas.

The nature of the development as a Rapid Transit Service (**RTS**) system provides significant movement and transport opportunity currently absent in the Wakatipu area. Such infrastructure is defined as nationally significant under the NPS-UD. Efficient and reliable public transportation of this nature is likely to stimulate wider regeneration and development along the route through improving access between employment, residential and community destinations. The electrically powered cable car system provides the opportunity for a low-emission transportation option for the region which has the potential to support sustainable development within the walkable catchments of the proposed stations.

Overall, from an urban design perspective the cable car development proposal supports the ambitions of Policy 1 of the NPS-UD, providing a high quality and reliable public rapid transit service that will contribute to and enable well-functioning urban environments particularly within the station catchments.

Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan

The Queenstown Spatial Plan (2021- currently under review) identifies a consolidation approach to growth and urban development primarily by growing within and around the existing urban areas. It emphasises connectivity between its increasingly remote neighbourhoods (eg Jacks Point, Ladies Mile), particularly via public transport, with an ambition to become a "car free destination" for its important tourist sector. The cable car proposal aligns with this intent by providing stations to service existing urban areas of Queenstown and Frankton. Specifically the spatial plan identifies the '*concentration of growth in the existing urban areas will mean more people live in areas where public transport, cycling and walking is an easy and attractive transport option'* which directly relates to the purpose of the cable car

proposal. The location of stations have been specifically chosen within urban areas that generate high demand for transportation and an integration of landuse.

The spatial plan adopts the planning standard and hierarchical classification of centres (metropolitan, town, local and neighbourhood) with associated descending complexity, diversity and intensity in land use structure. The cable car proposal seeks to locate all urban stations within the metropolitan centres of Queenstown or Frankton and the future Town Centre of Ladies Mile reinforcing their importance in the region. Furthermore, the cable car network provides RTS level of public transport connectivity between the two major existing metropolitan growth areas of Queenstown and Frankton which is currently absent. Because of the uncertainty associated with crossing the Transpower high voltage lines, an alternate alignment option is also put forward. While this does not provide the same level of direct connectivity to Five Mile, it nevertheless offers an alternate approach to linking the Frankton area with Queenstown and Ladies Mile.

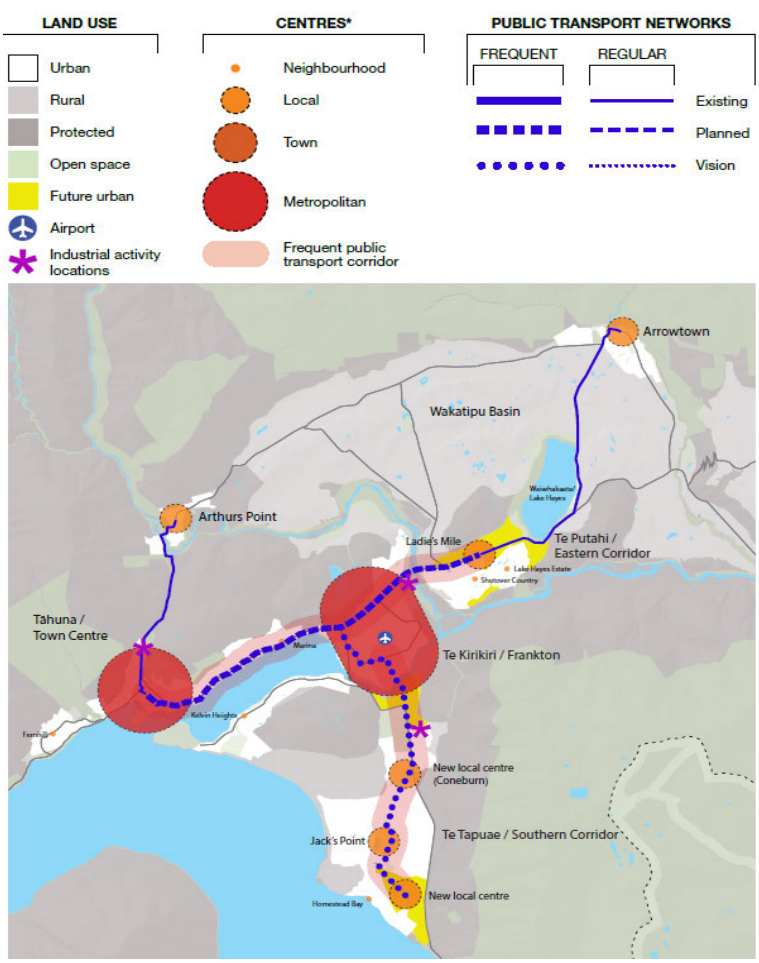

Figure 1 Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan (2021) - Spatial Elements Map 7

The QLSP specifically identifies the need to invest in public transport and active mode networks and to promote car free destinations that are efficient and resilient. The cable car has the potential to deliver against these specific strategies set out in the plan. As a transport mode the cable cars are highly efficient and reliable offering a high quality of customer experience benefits. As the system is 'off-line' it is not subject to other road-based vehicle congestion or accidents that may hold up or delay service. The cable car system provides a reliable journey time that is an important component of passenger choice and patronage. The reliability of the service is a key benefit of the proposal particularly between Queenstown and the Airport which is notoriously unreliable and often subject to congestion.

The cable car as a RTS mode of transportation promotes and enables compact urban form. The frequency and reliability of the service enables an alternative to car-dependant development which can be inefficient in allocating developable land for car parking. It is therefore a key enabler in more intensive residential and commercial landuse development. The RTS has the ability to replace the need to provide for private vehicles in some cases which aligns with the QLSP strategy or promoting car free development and well-connected neighbourhoods.

Overall the Queenstown Cable Car proposal aligns particularly well to many of the QLSPs strategies relating to growth of the Wakatipu area, ensuring strong urban form relationships that closely integrate land use, transport and built form. The cable car proposal has the potential to be a key element in achieving the QLSP vision to 'grow well' and to support community wellbeing and prosperity out to 2050.

Station urban environments

The proposed cable car stations and infrastructure as they relate to urban design effects are located in five main urban locations, Queenstown Town Centre, Frankton Hub / Airport, Five Mile, Ferry Hill / Frankton North / Quail Rise, and Lower Shotover / Ladies Mile. These areas are distinctly different urban environments in terms of the character,

function and urban form (both existing and anticipated) within the planning framework. Refer to the FTTA planning report for a full description of each station site and the *Contextual Design Report_Referral Application* for station and pedestrian catchment drawings.

1) Queenstown Station

The proposed Queenstown station is located adjacent to Gorge Road within Queenstown town centre. The site is on the Boundary Street Carpark which is a large undeveloped site in the town centre. It is located adjacent to the existing community facilities of the Queenstown Library, Queenstown Recreation Centre and Queenstown Memorial Hall. The site is located within the town centre catchment, influenced by not only these community uses but also the commercial, retail and accommodation uses within the town. Residential and visitor accommodation surrounds the station site to the north and east across Gorge Road. Although surrounding residential development is predominantly 1-2 storey, the PDP has 'upzoned' these residential areas to High Density Residential (**HDRZ**) providing opportunities for urban intensification, which the cable can will help to unlock.

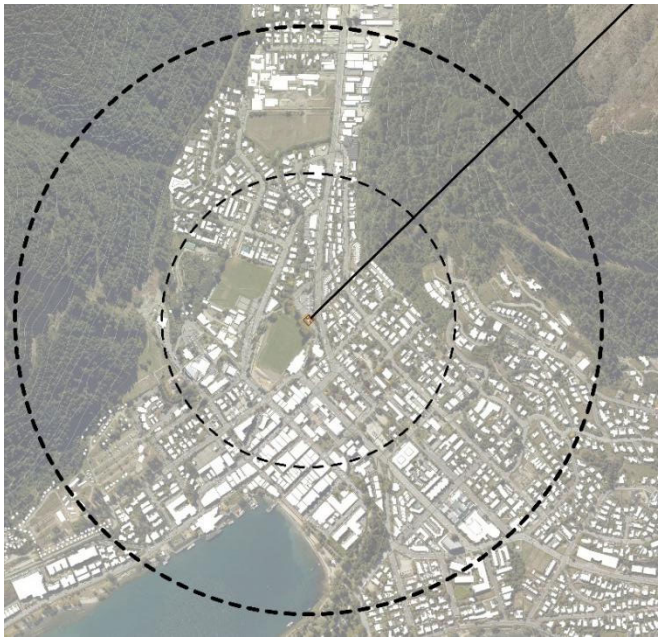

Figure 2 Example: Queenstown Station Approximate Catchment (400m & 800m)

The station's wider catchment provides coverage across the full extent of the town centre including to important landuse designations in the area such as the Queenstown Gardens, the retail precinct of Shotover Street, the important tourist destination of the Esplanade, Queenstown Primary School and the future Lake View Development area, all within a 800m or 10 minute walking distance.

1) Frankton Hub / Airport stations

The proposed cable car alignment, Frankton Hub Station and Airport Station are located adjacent to State Highway 6 (**SH6**) and residential development along McBride Street in Frankton. The Airport runway and Frankton Golf Course are located directly across SH6 to the Northeast. Commercial and retail development are located around the junction of SH6 and SH6a to the north of the stations and the Lakes District Hospital, Queenstown Airport and associated car parking infrastructure are located to the south of the stations and cable car alignment. The station's wider catchments provide coverage to important land uses in the area including the Queenstown Events centre, Remarkables Primary School and the Remarkables Shopping Centre all within an 800m or 10 minute walking distance.

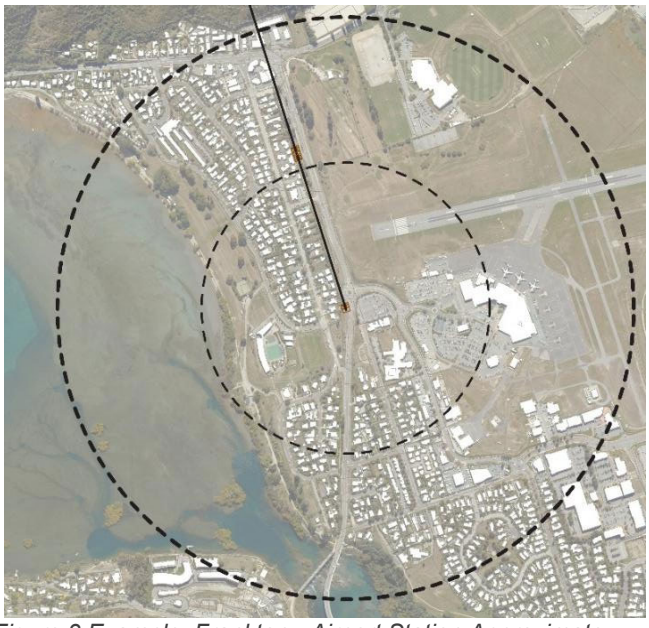

Figure 3 Example: Frankton - Airport Station Approximate Catchment (400m & 800m)

The station site are partly in the SH6 road reserve and partly in the adjacent recreation reserve. The stations are expected to have minimal impact on the reserve, being a narrow strip of grassed land along the state highway which is neither particularly useful, nor well used. The

cable car development will retain activities such as dog walking, cycling and general pedestrian access along the reserve strip with minimal change in amenity value. The key constraint for the cable car development are the height restrictions associated with the runway and airplane flight paths.

2) Five Mile Station

The Five Mile Station is located within the road reserve of SH6 between Grant Road and Hawthorne Drive directly adjacent to Kmart within the Five Mile shopping centre. The Five Mile shopping centre is a significant retail and commercial destination serving the Wakatipu area as well as the wider Central Lakes and Central Otago regions. The cable car service would provide an alternative access mode to existing private vehicle and bus services reinforcing the importance of the retail hub in the Wakatipu area and providing high quality RTS from Queenstown the Airport and Ladies Mile.

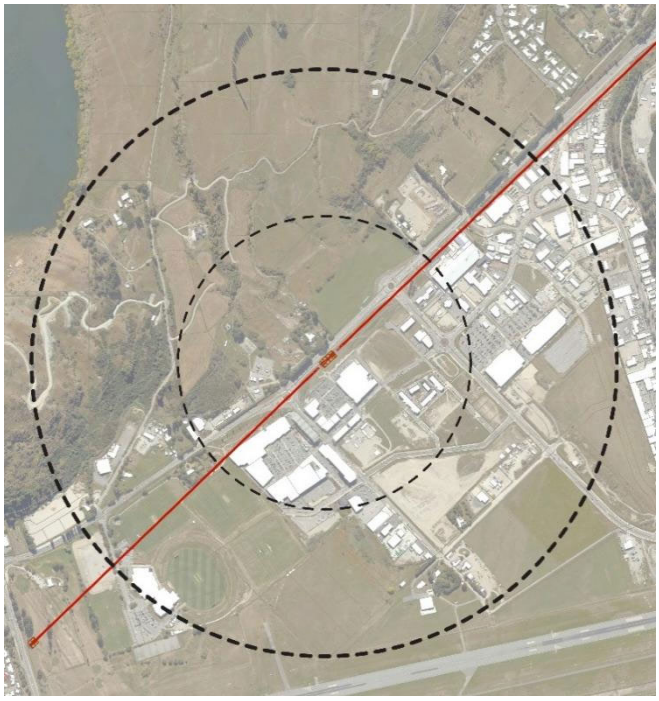

Figure 4 Example: Five Mile Station Approximate Catchment (400m & 800m)

The station site is within the state highway setback and is currently landscaped and provides the location for the 'Timber Trail' an important active transport connection through Frankton Flats. To the north, on the opposite side of SH6, the land which is currently rural in character is zoned Business Mised Use (**BMUZ**) in the PDP. It is therefore anticipated that significant landuse development that reinforces the retail/commercial offering of Five Mile and Frankton Flats will occur on these sites. The cable car station location has the potential to be an enabler of future mixed-use and residential development in these areas on the northern side of SH6.

The station's wider catchments provide coverage to important land uses in the area including the mixed-use, commercial and residential areas within Frankton Flats, future high density residential areas to the north of SH6 and employment and industrial areas surrounding Glenda Drive all within an 800m or 10 minute walking distance.

3) Frankton North / Ferry Hill / Quail Rise stations

The Frankton North, Ferry Hill and Quail Rise Stations are located in the northwest of Frankton Flats. The Frankton North Station is located on the recreation reserve elevated above SH6 and overlooking the Queenstown Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Quail Rise Station is located in the carpark site adjacent to the Shotover River and SH6 bridge.

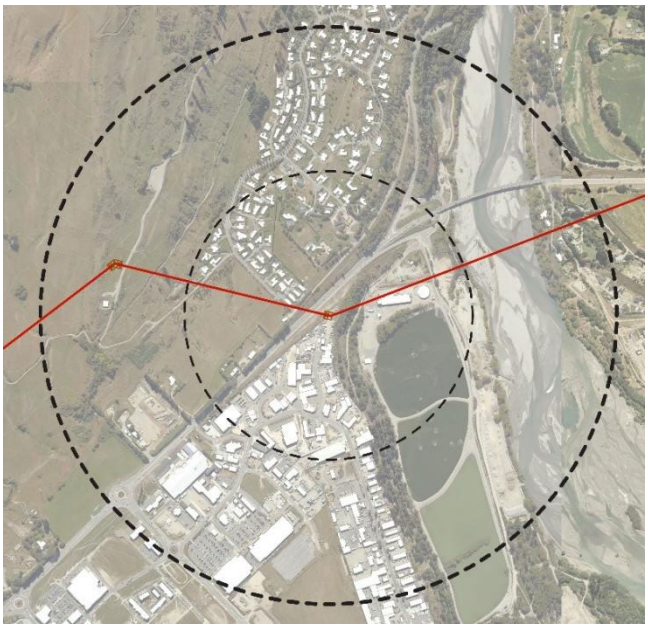

Figure 5 Example: Frankton North Station Approximate Catchment (400m & 800m)

Located to the north of the Frankton North and Quail Rise stations and west of the Quail Rise Station is the Quail Rise residential neighbourhood. The employment and industrial areas of Glenda Drive are located to the south of the stations. This employment area will benefit from access to RTS and contribute positively to the amenity and access for people employed in the area while not detracting from the functional needs associated with industrial activities. The station's wider catchments

provide coverage for residential areas of Quail Rise and Shotover Country within a 10 minute 800m walking distance.

The cable car development reinforces the existing and future planned pedestrian and cycle network, the Queenstown Trail and routes along Jims Way adjacent to SH6 including the future bridge crossing being considered by NZTA.

4) Ladies Mile and Lower Shotover stations

The Ladies Mile and Lower Shotover Stations are located adjacent to SH6 on private land and road reserve respectively. The Ladies Mile Station is located in the heart of the future Ladies Mile Development. It is adjacent to the 'Commercial Precinct' and within 'High Density Residential Precincts' as identified in Queenstown Lakes District Council's Te Pūtahi Ladies Mile Structure Plan. The cable car RTS enables this planned development providing a sustainable transport solution to growth in the area.

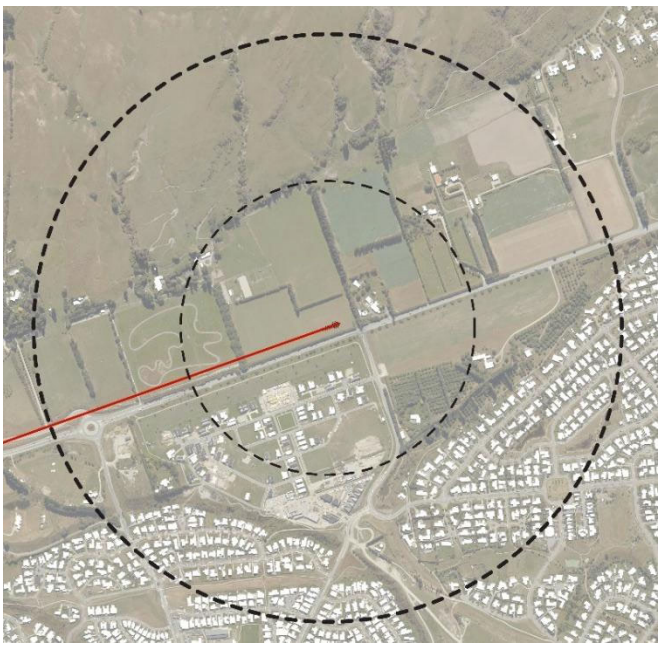

Figure 6 Example: Ladies Mile Station Approximate Catchment (400m & 800m)

The Lower Shotover Station is located adjacent to the Wakatipu Baby Memorial Cemetery and planned Simplicity Living development, which will provide much needed rental accommodation in the area. The strategic location of the station will enable efficient transportation for future tenants.

The station's wider catchments provide coverage for the existing residential areas of Shotover Country and Lake Hayes Estate including the Queenstown Country Club retirement village south of SH6. It also provides coverage for and future high and medium density residential development within the Ladies Mile development both within a 10 minute 800m walking distance from the station.

Urban design effects

From this initial review of the cable car development as it relates to urban design matters within the planning framework it is reasonable to conclude that as a result of the proposal including both stations and corridor infrastructure are likely to generate urban design effects, both positive and negative. These will require consideration in the substantive application. Although the effects vary based on location, scale, the corresponding sensitivities of the receiving environment and the anticipated outcomes within the planning framework the effects can be considered in five main categories which are:

1. The benefits of cable car RTS to provide connectivity across the Wakatipu urban environment, providing efficient and reliable transportation focused on existing and future urban centres; and
2. The potential built environment benefits of cable car RTS including enabling a compact, integrated and well designed urban form, sustainable development and enhancement of well-functioning urban environments; and
3. Providing connectivity and movement choice including public transport, private vehicle access, walking and cycling and site-specific considerations such as Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (**CPTED**); and
4. Built form bulk, visual dominance, size, scale and height of proposed stations and infrastructure in relation to the existing and anticipated future development context; and
5. Amenity values including privacy, outlook, access to sunlight and shadowing for adjacent existing and future development particularly residential

5.0 Anticipated and known adverse effects

Height of station and infrastructure

It is anticipated that the height of stations and infrastructure including pylons and cables will breach the zone-based height limits. However the urban design effects will be managed appropriately due to highly articulated and modulated built form and particularly the minimal bulk of the station architecture. Stations and associated infrastructure will have significantly less bulk than residential or commercial building of the same height. Overall the built form will not look out of place within the stations' contexts. Further analysis on the urban design effects of height will be considered in the substantive submission.

Amenity values including privacy and outlook

Potentially the greatest impact of the proposed development from an urban design perspective is on the amenity values of surrounding residential properties, in particular the loss of privacy due to fleeting views of nearby development from within the cable car cabins as they pass by. The rope way is generally elevated for safety and practical reasons and the cabins are therefore similarly elevated. As they pass adjacent residential development in the urban centres it is anticipated that fleeting views into some properties will be afforded. However care has been taken with the alignment to minimise these effects and this effect is confined to two relatively limited areas of Weaver Street within Queenstown Town Centre and McBride Street in Frankton. These effects will be examined on a detailed basis in any substantive application.

Shadowing and sunlight access

Station and infrastructure built form will result in some shadowing effects on neighbouring properties. It is anticipated that shadowing effects will primarily be associated to the station buildings. However due to the highly modulated and articulated station architecture the overall shadowing effects are anticipated to be minimal and specific to immediately adjacent properties. It is also anticipated that the shadowing effects will relate to the Airport and Frankton Hub stations due to their proximity to neighbouring residential properties south of the development. Stations in Queenstown and Frankton North are not anticipated to result in significant shadow effects. These effects will be examined on a detailed basis in any substantive application.

In terms of the cable car infrastructure the shadow effects are anticipated to be minimal. It is noted that the passing cable car cabins will provide some shadowing effects however this is periodic and the scale of the effects is anticipated to be minimal.

6.0 Anticipated positive effects

It is widely evidenced that RTS such as that proposed with the Queenstown Cable Car network can stimulate landuse renewal and uplift within urban environments. We have seen in Auckland that increases in land value and an upswing in development surrounding the City Rail Link stations has occurred since the outset of the project's initiation. This urban regeneration is often most prominent surrounding stations and infrastructure with direct relationship between landuse and the transportation. It is likely that these positive effects will be seen with the Queenstown Cable Car project specifically in regard to potential residential, commercial and visitor accommodation development within the walkable catchment of stations.

From an urban design perspective, the proposed Queenstown Cable Car proposal is consistent with Policy 1 of the NPS-UD providing high quality and reliable RTS service that will contribute to and enable well-functioning urban environments particularly within the station catchments. In particular, the cable car RTS is likely to stimulate wider regeneration and development along the route through improving access between employment, residential and community destinations. The electrically powered cable car system provides a transport alternative that delivers low-emission transportation option for the region and support sustainable development which is a key aspect of the NPS-UD definition of a well functioning urban environments.

Furthermore, the proposal aligns particularly well with both the Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan and supports Chapter 3 objectives of the Proposed District Plan that seeks to achieve sustainable management of growth. It aligns to the

QLSP's strategies relating to growth of the Wakatipu area ensuring strong urban form relationships that closely integrates land use, transport and built form. The cable car proposal has the potential to be a key element of the QLSP vision to 'grow well' and ensure community wellbeing and prosperity out to 2050.

Overall, the regional wide benefits of the high quality and reliable connectivity achieved with the cable car RTS proposal has significant benefit to enable well functioning urban environments. It should be considered that this goes someway to offset the potential localised and relatively minimal adverse amenity effects on existing residential properties.

7.0 Conclusion with respect to the Fast Track Approvals Act 2014

As is demonstrated from the above evaluation of the referral project, the QCC aligns with the key urban development objectives and policies of the PDP, and the QLSP, such that the project "is consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies", as per section 22(2)(x) of the FTAA as far as they relate to urban design matters.

Also as demonstrated above, taking into account section 22(2)(iii) of the FTAA, the project will "… contribute to a well-functioning urban environment (within the meaning of policy 1 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development 2020)"

8.0 Methodology for substantive submission - Urban Design Assessment

In addition to the anticipated and known effects identified in this memo, an Urban Design Assessment (**UDA**) will be prepared for the substantive application that focuses on zone specific policy and provisions. It will cover an assessment of effects to determine, identify and manage effects appropriately. The UDA will provide a district plan zone rules-based assessment building on the findings of this memo with a focus on the key urban design effects of transport related built environment regeneration, connectivity and movement choice, built form height and bulk and amenity values including privacy. Included in the assessment will be sectional studies and shadow diagrams to illustrate the scope and quantum of effects on neighbouring properties.

End

Edward Jolly - Associate Principal