



Appendix

08

Powerhouse Fast-track Application

Policy & Planning Report



Prepared by John Edmonds & Associates Ltd

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This planning and policy assessment has been prepared by John Edmonds and Associates on behalf of Bowen Peak Limited to support the Restoring the Reserve – Powerhouse to Peak Cable Car and Fernhill Heights Development Fast-Track Referral Application.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to identify and assess the proposal against the relevant statutory and strategic planning instruments that guide development within the Queenstown Lakes District. The project has been reviewed in the context of national direction (including the Reserve Management Act 1991, Reserves Act 1977, National Policy Statements on Urban Development and Indigenous Biodiversity), regional strategies and policy statements prepared by the Otago Regional Council, iwi management plans for Kāi Tahu ki Ōtago and Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku, and local planning frameworks including the Queenstown Lakes District Council's Spatial Plan, Long Term Plan, and Proposed District Plan.
- 1.3 Each section of this report summarises how the proposal aligns with key objectives and policies, providing an assessment of overall consistency and identifying any conditional alignments. The approach taken follows the guidance provided in the project correspondence, focusing on how the proposal 'sets out the project in the context of relevant planning documents' to assist the Minister for Infrastructure and the expert panel through the Fast-track process.
- 1.4 The report concludes that Fernhill Heights demonstrates overall alignment with planning policy direction, particularly through its integration of sustainable transport, housing, and biodiversity outcomes. Those benefits are considered appropriate mitigation of any landscape effects.

2.0 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- 2.1 My name is John Edmonds, and I hold the qualification of a Bachelor of Regional Planning from Massey University. I am a full member of the New Zealand Planning Institute.
- 2.2 I have 34 years' experience in planning and resource management roles, including strategic planning, master planning, urban design, policy development, project management and other resource management consultancy services. I have worked in both local government and private sector roles.
- 2.3 My previous roles include five years at Nelson City Council and six years with the Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC), most of that time (1997-2001) as the District Planner.
- 2.4 In January 2001 I went into private consultancy, establishing John Edmonds & Associates Ltd. In this role I have managed planners, environmental scientists and more recently surveyors and project managers. I have been personally responsible for master planning, strategic planning, preparing resource consent applications and assessments of effects, and been the principal consultant assisting with planning and environmental issues for a range of significant local developments. I have also presented evidence at Council and Environment Court hearings on regular occasions.

3.0 PROJECT SUMMARY

- 3.1 The applicant proposes the development of three contiguous electric aerial ropeways across the Te Taumata o Hakitekura (Ben Lomond) Reserve, that extend from the One Mile Powerhouse Reserve up to DOC land on the Saddle between Bowen Peak and Ben Lomond, culminating with a viewing platform located high up on the western face of Bowen Peak on Ben Lomond Station. The aerial ropeway route also connects the One Mile Reserve base buildings to the proposed Fernhill Heights residential neighbourhood.

Aerial Ropeway Network	The proposal comprises three contiguous aerial ropeways, with final system types to be confirmed during the substantive phase of the Fast-track application.
	<p><i>Powerhouse Gondola (10-PAX vehicles)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Connects the One Mile Powerhouse Reserve linking to the Saddle Funifor. ▪ Provides access to the planned new 52-hectare Fernhill Heights residential development. ▪ Enables access and entry to the proposed Te Taumata o Hakitekura Predator-free Sanctuary. ▪ Facilitates recreation including mountain biking (via the extended Wynyard DH trail) and walking (via the re-established One Mile Creek walkway).
	<p><i>Saddle Funifor (110-PAX vehicles)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Links Fernhill Heights to the Saddle with dual redundancy via the paired funifor systems. ▪ Facilitates access for recreation, conservation, and tourism, including walking, skiing, sightseeing, retail, hospitality, & education activities. ▪ Opens access to the new Sanctuary Perimeter mountain bike trail.
Station Buildings including Aerial Ropeway Infrastructure & Ancillary Development	<p><i>Bowen Peak Gondola (10-PAX vehicles)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Connects the Saddle to a discreetly located station and viewing platform high up on the western face of Bowen Peak. ▪ Provides access to seasonal attractions including a mountain bike park, new Bowen Peak Downhill mountain bike trail, and the proposed Bowen Peak Ski Area (similar to Japan's Mt Asahidake).
	<p><i>Powerhouse Station</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Removal of wilding pines and blackberry replacing with native revegetation. ▪ Establishment of a small-scale retail, hospitality, and tourism precinct to enhance public access.
	<p><i>Fernhill Heights Station</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Located adjacent to a new open-space European-style community hub surrounded by alpine chalets on private land. ▪ Includes a bus turnaround, multi-level carpark, and integrated retail, hospitality, and tourism facilities, all on private land. ▪ Adjacent to the formal entrance of the Te Taumata o Hakitekura Reserve Predator-free Sanctuary.

	<p><i>Saddle Station</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two-storey facility incorporating Hiker’s bar/restaurant, retail, and guest services on the upper level. ▪ Lower level includes two 30-bed bunk rooms for outdoor education, a public shelter, and public toilets.
	<p><i>Bowen Peak Station & Viewing Platform</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discreetly positioned high up on the western face of Bowen Peak. ▪ Includes a public viewing platform, shelter, and toilets. ▪ Provides 365-day tourism access to seasonal recreation facilities (walking, mountain biking and snow skiing).
Residential Development – Fernhill Heights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 175 alpine-style chalets comprising 1,333 residential units (a mix of 2, 3 & 4 bedrooms), across a 52-hectare site, designed in the architectural style of the Swiss Alps. ▪ 5% of all residential units allocated to the Queenstown Lakes Community Housing Trust for affordable housing. ▪ 50% of all residential units designated to key worker accommodation. ▪ Development structured under fee simple and unit title subdivision.
Predator-Free Sanctuaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishment of two predator-free sanctuaries within the One Mile Powerhouse Sanctuary (3 hectares) for native bird breeding habitats near Lake Whakatipu. ▪ Establishment of the Te Taumata o Hakitekura Predator-free Sanctuary (290 hectares) spanning upper One-Mile and Two-Mile Creek valleys, supporting native fauna such as kiwi, takahē and kākāpō on the ground, and tūi, korimako, kākā, kea, kererū, tauhou, Kākāriki, Kakaruai, Kārearea, Kōkako, Mohou, Pīwauwau and Pīwakawaka. ▪ Removal of wilding pines with native replanting across the Reserve to restore the area’s pre-Pakeha ecological character.
Extension of the Walking Trail Network in the Vicinity of One Mile and Two Mile Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Construction of an elevated fibreglass boardwalk trail from the Powerhouse up to Fernhill Heights along One Mile Creek, adjacent to waterfalls and rapids. ▪ Extension of the original trail into the Two-Mile Creek valley up to the Fernhill Heights station and Te Taumata o Hakitekura Predator-free Sanctuary entrance.
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The development will be sequenced over 27 years across multiple stages, as set out in Appendix 2 – Indicative Program.

4.0 CULTURAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- 4.1 I acknowledge that they are not *tangata whenua* and do not hold ancestral connections to this place. This assessment of cultural values has been prepared from a European perspective and is therefore not a substitute for the knowledge, experiences, or traditions of mana whenua. While every effort has been made to recognise and respect Māori cultural values, the findings should be read as an external technical assessment and are intended to complement—not replace—guidance provided directly by iwi or hapū with ancestral authority over the area.

5.0 POLICY ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 A high-level assessment of a wide range of relevant policy documents has been undertaken, including national, regional, iwi and district-level plans, policies and statements.
- 5.2 An overview of the policy document is provided, and the key objectives and policies of those documents are summarised and their alignment with the Bowen Peak project assessed.

5.1 NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT – URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The **National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD)** seeks to promote compact, well-functioning urban areas supported by efficient infrastructure and responsive planning. The development demonstrates strong consistency with the NPS-UD's overall intent, particularly in its integrated approach to housing, transport, and recreation outcomes.

Urban Form and Growth Responsiveness	Fernhill Heights advances Objectives 1 and 2 , ensuring development meets community needs for housing and accessibility while responding to strong regional growth pressures in Queenstown. Although the site lies just outside the current Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), it forms a logical extension of the existing Fernhill neighbourhood , with close proximity to established infrastructure and amenities. The project's focus on mixed-use, high-amenity living and enhanced recreation access supports a well-functioning, compact urban form consistent with the NPS-UD.
Integrated Land Use, Transport, and Infrastructure	Alignment with Objective 3 / Policy 1 is demonstrated through the Bowen Peak gondola system , which links the town centre to the development area and surrounding recreation network. This integration reduces car dependence, enhances accessibility, and supports low-carbon transport objectives. Coordinated parking, servicing, and utility planning reinforce efficient infrastructure delivery and compliance with the NPS-UD's direction for integrated urban systems.
Development Outside the UGB and Intensification	While located beyond the current UGB, the project aligns with Policy 8 , which enables development outside urban boundaries where it contributes to a well-functioning environment. Fernhill Heights meets this test through its housing supply, recreation access, and transport connections. Potential inconsistency with Policies 3–4 (Enabling intensification within UGBs) is mitigated by the proposal's clear public benefits, logical urban form, and capacity to relieve pressure on constrained housing supply within the existing boundary. The proposal also supports Policy 6 , addressing the cost of restricting development capacity in high-demand locations.

Environmental Outcomes and Implementation	The project supports Objective 6 (Reducing emissions and improving resilience) by promoting sustainable, low-emission transport and restoring native habitats through the creation of the Te Taumata o Hakitekura predator-free sanctuary . These outcomes align with the RMA’s “Matters of National Importance” (section 6) and enhance both ecological and recreational values. The proposal also aligns with the QLDC Growth Strategy by utilising existing infrastructure and providing a coherent, integrated approach to urban expansion.
Summary	In summary, the Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates strong consistency with the NPS-UD . Its integrated transport, housing, and environmental outcomes provide a well-justified response to Queenstown’s growth needs. While outside the current UGB, the project’s urban integration, sustainability measures, and public benefit clearly advance the intent of the NPS-UD to create a compact, resilient, and well-functioning urban environment .

5.2 NATIONAL POLICY STATEMENT – INDIGENOUS BIODIVERSITY 2023

The **NPS-IB 2023** requires councils to **identify, protect, and manage Significant Natural Areas (SNAs)** and maintain **no net loss** of indigenous biodiversity across Aotearoa.

It directs stronger avoidance of adverse effects on high-value biodiversity, improved partnership with tangata whenua, and proactive restoration of degraded ecosystems.

Restoration, Maintenance, and Avoidance	The proposal contributes directly to the NPS-IB’s overarching objective to maintain and restore indigenous biodiversity. Key initiatives include removal of wilding pines, native enrichment planting , and establishment of a predator-free sanctuary to re-establish native flora and fauna. These actions respond to the concerns outlined in the initial project direction email about the historic loss of biodiversity and the absence of ecological protection. The project applies the NPS-IB’s effects-management hierarchy (avoid → minimise → remedy → offset/compensate) through sensitive design and micro-siting of gondola infrastructure to avoid high-value habitats. Where avoidance is not practicable, mitigation and like-for-like restoration will be implemented, ensuring residual effects are appropriately managed.
Connectivity, Fauna Protection, and Freshwater Management	The proposal aligns strongly with NPS-IB provisions for highly mobile fauna and ecological connectivity . Gondola spans will use cable-marker devices to prevent bird strike, and vegetation clearance will be limited to wilding species, with native canopy and understorey retention to maintain habitat links. Seasonal construction windows and habitat restoration planting will further enhance biodiversity resilience. In accordance with NPS-IB policies on freshwater ecosystems and sediment control , erosion and sediment-management plans will ensure no increase in sedimentation to nearby streams such as One Mile Creek. Stabilisation, sequencing, and revegetation measures will be applied to protect freshwater-associated biodiversity and uphold Section 6(a) of the RMA regarding preservation of natural character.
Cultural Values, Positive Outcomes, and Infrastructure Design	The project will incorporate mātauranga Māori and tangata whenua values through collaborative design and monitoring partnerships, recognising taonga species and integrating indigenous ecological knowledge into restoration

	<p>planning. These commitments align with both the NPS-IB and the expectations outlined in the Fast-track correspondence for reports to demonstrate cultural responsiveness under the RMA.</p> <p>The project also supports NPS-IB objectives for positive biodiversity outcomes through long-term pest control, enrichment planting, and ecological monitoring to secure enduring habitat improvement. For new infrastructure, design measures will prioritise the use of existing disturbed corridors to minimise new clearance and justify any unavoidable disturbance through the hierarchy of avoidance and minimisation.</p>
Summary	<p>Overall, the Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates strong alignment with the NPS-IB 2023. The combination of restoration, native revegetation, fauna protection, cultural partnership, and sensitive infrastructure design ensures biodiversity values are enhanced rather than diminished. Conditional alignments for new infrastructure and maintenance can be mitigated through design and management measures. The project therefore meets the intent of the NPS-IB by restoring the natural environment, enhancing ecological values while enabling carefully managed development within the Te Taumata o Hakitekura landscape.</p>

5.3 OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL – STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS 2024 - 2034

The **Otago Regional Council's Strategic Directions 2024–2034**, sets out the 10-year regional vision for achieving sustainable, resilient, and connected communities across the Otago region. The project demonstrates strong alignment with the Strategic Directions through its integrated approach to **housing, recreation, biodiversity restoration, and low-emission transport infrastructure**, consistent with regional sustainability goals.

Vision, Partnership, and Communities	<p>The proposal supports the regional vision for healthy, connected communities and environments (ki uta ki tai) by integrating housing, recreation, and ecological restoration in a manner that enhances community access and liveability. Establishing and maintaining partnership with mana whenua will be central to the project's delivery, aligning with the Council's partnership and co-management objectives and the emphasis in the original project direction on meaningful engagement with local Māori stakeholders.</p> <p>The development strengthens community outcomes by improving access to open space, promoting recreation, and encouraging environmental stewardship. These elements align closely with the Strategic Directions' focus on empowered, cohesive communities contributing to positive environmental outcomes.</p>
Environmental Stewardship, Climate, and Resilience	<p>The project responds strongly to the Strategic Directions' environmental, resilience, and climate policies. Restoration of native vegetation, control of invasive species, and creation of a predator-free sanctuary directly support goals for thriving ecosystems, clean water, and sustainable resource use. Engineering design will ensure slope stability and manage drainage and erosion risks, providing structural and environmental resilience consistent with regional hazard management expectations.</p> <p>The Bowen Peak gondola/funifor system advances the region's climate and transport objectives by providing a low-emission, integrated public transport solution that connects the town centre with upper Fernhill and the upper</p>

	reserve area. This reduces private vehicle dependence, supports emission reduction targets, and enhances tourism connectivity—all consistent with the Otago Regional Council’s long-term transport vision.
Wellbeing, Implementation,	Fernhill Heights contributes to multi-dimensional wellbeing , combining social, cultural, environmental, and economic benefits through new housing, recreation, and ecological restoration. The project also demonstrates implementation agility , with a long-term delivery structure that allows for adaptive management and monitoring, consistent with the Council’s call for responsive, evidence-based progress tracking.
Summary	Overall, the proposal shows strong alignment with the Otago Regional Council’s Strategic Directions , contingent upon engagement with mana whenua and the successful implementation of environmental mitigation and restoration measures. By integrating housing, recreation, and sustainable transport within a restored natural landscape, the Fernhill Heights project can achieve regional sustainability and partnership-led planning consistent with the 2024–2034 vision for Otago.

5.4 OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL - OPERATIVE REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT 2019

The **Otago Regional Council’s Operative Regional Policy Statement (RPS) 2019** provides the regional framework for managing land, water, and landscape values, setting the policy context for district plans.

Integrated Management, Cultural Partnership, and Wellbeing	<p>The project supports the RPS direction for integrated management of resources, ensuring environmental, social, and infrastructural outcomes are coordinated across the wider landscape. Through combined housing, recreation, and ecological restoration, the proposal reflects the RPS intent to manage land, water, and ecosystems holistically.</p> <p>Alignment with Kai Tahu Partnership provisions could be achieved by establishing good lines of engagement with mana whenua and the integration of mātauranga Māori and respect for wāhi tūpuna (ancestral landscapes) in the design and environmental management framework. This directly responds to the guidance in the original project correspondence, which emphasised the importance of professional reports evidencing strong RMA-based cultural engagement.</p> <p>The project also contributes to economic, social, and cultural wellbeing, providing housing and tourism benefits that enhance community accessibility and recreation while maintaining environmental safeguards — consistent with the RPS’s balanced wellbeing objectives.</p>
Biodiversity, Landscapes, and Resilience	<p>The proposal aligns strongly with RPS policies for biodiversity and ecosystems, implementing avoidance and restoration measures to offset any vegetation loss and actively restore native habitats within the Te Taumata o Hakitekura Reserve. The design approach respects the RPS direction for protection of Outstanding Natural Features and Landscapes (ONFLs) by utilising recessive materials for both housing within the Fernhill Heights area and the infrastructure needed for the ropeway and associated stations and limiting skyline intrusion, ensuring visual effects remain minor and contextually appropriate.</p> <p>In accordance with the RPS’s natural hazards and climate resilience provisions, the gondola and associated infrastructure are designed for robust geotechnical and erosion resilience. These measures reflect both</p>

	environmental and engineering best practice, aligning with the Fast-track team's expectations for evidence-based planning and hazard management.
Infrastructure, Urban Growth, and Tourism	<p>The project demonstrates strong consistency with RPS objectives for infrastructure and renewable energy, contributing to sustainable, low-carbon transport and regional tourism outcomes via the gondola system. While located outside the current Urban Growth Boundary, the proposal's integrated urban form, proximity to established infrastructure, and clear public benefits mitigate this potential inconsistency.</p> <p>The development supports RPS provisions for tourism and recreation, recognising the proposal as a sustainable rural tourism activity that enhances public access and community wellbeing. In addition, predator control, restoration, and long-term ecological monitoring contribute to environmental enhancement and offsetting residual effects, satisfying the RPS's environmental improvement framework.</p>
Summary	<p>The Fernhill Heights proposal is not currently aligned with the UGB boundaries, however at a broader level it exhibits strong alignment with the Otago Regional Policy Statement 2019. The project's integrated approach to land use, infrastructure, biodiversity, and cultural partnership fulfils the RPS vision for sustainable management of Otago's natural and physical resources. The proposal meets regional policy intent by delivering tangible environmental restoration and community benefits consistent with the RMA's purpose of promoting sustainable management.</p>

5.5 OTAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL - PROPOSED REGIONAL POLICY STATEMENT 2021

The **Proposed Otago Regional Policy Statement (RPS) 2021** provides updated regional direction on climate, heritage, landscape, and infrastructure management.

Integrated Management and Urban Form	<p>The proposal supports the RPS objective for integrated management by addressing the relationship between land, water, biodiversity, and infrastructure across both the Te Taumata o Hakitekura Reserve and adjoining private land. Restoration initiatives and predator control demonstrate a holistic approach to catchment-scale management, directly reflecting the integrated planning principles anticipated by the RPS and Fast-track framework.</p> <p>While located outside the UGB, the development represents a strategic and compact extension of existing urban form. Fernhill Heights will result in public access benefits and integration and efficient use of existing infrastructure.</p>
Infrastructure, Biodiversity, and Landscape	<p>The project exhibits strong alignment with RPS policies for energy, infrastructure, and transport, through the development of a low-carbon gondola system that enhances connectivity while reducing vehicle emissions. This infrastructure supports both tourism and local transport objectives and is consistent with Otago's regional energy and emissions reduction priorities.</p> <p>In accordance with the RPS's ecosystems and indigenous biodiversity provisions, the project applies the effects-management hierarchy and implements restoration and pest-control initiatives to deliver ecological consistency. No Significant Natural Areas (SNAs) have been identified within the project footprint; however, mitigation and offsetting through ecological design, native planting, and long-term predator management demonstrate strong alignment with biodiversity policies.</p>

	For Natural Features and Landscapes , design measures minimise skyline intrusion through careful siting and the use of visually recessive materials, maintaining conditional but acceptable consistency with the RPS's landscape protection objectives.
Hazards and Climate Resilience	Geotechnical and erosion resilience are central to the design, satisfying the RPS requirement to avoid natural hazard risk and strengthen climate adaptation measures. Whilst more detailed analysis is required, the initial reporting indicates that the development is feasible, and that slope stability can be maintained and risks to downhill property minimised consistent with regional hazard management.
Mana Whenua Partnership	The applicant recognises Kai Tahu values and mātauraka Māori , and the need to embed a long-term cultural partnership and co-design in the restoration and monitoring of biodiversity outcomes. This approach fulfils the RPS policy direction for mana whenua partnership and will strengthen cultural and ecological alignment across the project area.
Cross-Boundary Integration	The proposal aligns with the RPS's cross-boundary integration objectives by supporting collaboration between the Otago Regional Council and Queenstown Lakes District Council within the Fast-track consenting framework. This joint approach ensures consistency between regional policy direction and local implementation.
Summary	Overall, the Fernhill Heights project demonstrates strong consistency with the Proposed Regional Policy Statement 2021 . Its integrated land use, renewable transport system, and environmental restoration commitments align with the region's long-term sustainability objectives. Conditional alignment regarding the UGB position is mitigated by the project's clear public benefit, environmental enhancement, and partnership-led management framework.

5.6 NGĀI TAHU KI MURIHIKU - IWI MANAGEMENT PLAN, 2008 (TE TANGI A TAUIRA – THE CRY OF THE PEOPLE)

The **Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku Iwi Management Plan 2008** which provides iwi policies on *kaitiakitanga*, cultural landscapes, water management, biodiversity, and consultation protocols.

Catchment Health, Mauri, and Cultural Landscapes	<p>Consistent with iwi policies on Ki Uta ki Tai, the proposal addresses whole-of-catchment effects from slopes to Lake Wakatipu through best-practice erosion and sediment control, staged earthworks, and low-impact stormwater management. These measures will promote catchment-scale restoration and protect mauri within the downstream environment.</p> <p>Under Mauri and Kaitiakitaka, the project safeguards life-supporting capacity by prioritising avoidance of adverse effects before mitigation. Low-impact design, native replanting, and pest control initiatives enhance ecological mauri and ensure the project's infrastructure remains consistent with cultural environmental values.</p> <p>For Wāhi Tūpuna and Cultural Landscapes, the design should incorporate recessive materials, subdued colours, and culturally sensitive integration to maintain the integrity of alpine backdrops and heritage viewshafts. This reflects the iwi directive in the management plan to protect cultural landscapes from intrusive or dominating built form, achieving strong alignment with mitigation measures.</p>
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<p>Biodiversity, Water Quality, and Access</p>	<p>The proposal supports iwi aspirations for Mahika Kai and Biodiversity by restoring habitat connectivity, protecting taonga species, and establishing extensive predator control and native corridor planting. These outcomes align with iwi expectations for biodiversity enhancement and sustainable ecosystem management.</p> <p>In relation to Te Mana o te Wai / Water Quality, the proposal will be designed to prevent sediment and pollutants from entering One Mile Creek and Lake Wakatipu through flocc-assisted stormwater treatment and low-impact drainage systems. These measures ensure the protection of water quality, reinforcing the iwi principle that water is the foundation of all life.</p> <p>Public access and recreation have been designed to balance community benefit with cultural and environmental protection. Managed visitor numbers, wayfinding, and education programmes will safeguard tranquillity and uphold the iwi expectation that recreation respect natural and cultural values.</p>
<p>Partnership and Resilience</p>	<p>The project embodies Partnership and Process principles through commitments to implementing a 14-point plan that establish and commit to ongoing engagement with Papatipu Rūnanga, ensuring cultural values are embedded in ecological design, interpretation, and bilingual naming. These initiatives align strongly with the iwi's emphasis on <i>kaitiakitanga</i> and collaborative management.</p> <p>Provisions for waste, hazard, and climate resilience are achieved through the use of fire-resistant, low-carbon materials and adaptive monitoring to manage wildfire and slope stability risks. The cumulative effects of development are mitigated by the project's unique nature and integrated approach, ensuring it can be distinguished from future infrastructure applications.</p>
<p>Summary</p>	<p>Overall, the Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates strong consistency with the Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku Iwi Management Plan 2008, particularly its goals for catchment health, mauri protection, cultural landscape preservation, and mana whenua partnership. Through restorative ecological practices, culturally aligned design, and long-term engagement, the project upholds <i>Te Tangi a Tauria</i> principles of environmental guardianship (<i>kaitiakitanga</i>) while enabling appropriate, low-impact development within the Te Taumata o Hakitekura landscape.</p> <p>The project also shows strong overall alignment with the plan's principles of Ki Uta ki Tai (mountains-to-sea management), Mauri and Kaitiakitaka, and Wāhi Tūpuna protection through its integrated environmental design, ecological restoration programme, and planned partnership engagement with Papatipu Rūnanga.</p>

5.7 KĀI TAHU KI ŌTAGO - NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN, 2005

The **Kāi Tahu ki Ōtago Natural Resources Management Plan 2005** outlines iwi expectations for *kaitiakitanga*, consultation, and the protection of **wāhi tapu, mahika kai, and wai Māori**.

Waterways

The proposal supports the plan's **Wai Māori / Waterways** objectives by incorporating best-practice **erosion and sediment control, flocc-assisted treatment, and low-impact drainage (LID)** systems to prevent contamination of One Mile Creek and Lake Wakatipu. Riparian restoration and native planting along drainage lines maintain catchment health and protect mauri, ensuring strong consistency with iwi expectations for freshwater protection.

Cultural Heritage	In line with Wāhi Taoka (Cultural Heritage) policy, the project avoids skyline intrusion through low-profile infrastructure, recessive materials, and cultural design interpretation, safeguarding alpine viewshafts and cultural landscapes. This achieves strong alignment with mitigation measures in place.
Access	The proposal enhances Mahika Kai and customary access by integrating habitat restoration and controlled public pathways. Predator control, native planting, and improved ecological connectivity support both biodiversity and iwi aspirations for cultural and environmental recovery.
Biodiversity, Earthworks, and Natural Character	The project contributes to the plan's Indigenous Biodiversity and Earthworks & Discharges objectives by removing wilding pines, re-establishing native vegetation, and managing runoff through staged and adaptive construction practices. Erosion blankets, sediment ponds, and active monitoring ensure construction effects remain contained, consistent with Kāi Tahu principles of minimising disturbance to land and water. The design of the gondola's base terminal and lake margin interface maintains natural character and amenity through subdued lighting, careful siting, and setbacks from sensitive lake margins. This alignment with iwi values ensures landscape and water integrity are preserved.
Partnership, Climate Resilience	The proposal aligns with Kāi Tahu Participation expectations through early engagement and a formal partnership framework that incorporates cultural values, bilingual naming, and interpretive design. This approach demonstrates a living expression of <i>kaitiakitanga</i> and supports long-term collaboration with iwi throughout construction and operation phases. Under Sustainable Design and Climate provisions, the gondola and associated structures utilise low-carbon materials, electrified operations, and fire-resilient design , supporting both iwi environmental aspirations and regional emissions reduction goals.
Summary	Overall, the project achieves strong alignment with the Kāi Tahu ki Ōtago Natural Resources Management Plan 2005 , upholding the protection of wai, wāhi taoka, and biodiversity .

5.8 QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL – SPATIAL PLAN 2021

The Spatial Plan 2021 is the district's overarching growth strategy that establishes a 30-year vision for a compact, well-connected urban form, directing most future development within defined urban growth boundaries linked to efficient transport and infrastructure networks. It seeks to balance housing, environment, and economic objectives by consolidating urban areas, protecting rural landscapes, and aligning land-use decisions with climate, biodiversity, and Kāi Tahu partnership outcomes.

Consolidated Growth & Limits to Sprawl	The Spatial Plan takes a broad view of where to house the majority of projected population growth in the Wakatipu Basin and logically identifies 2 large flat areas that can accommodate higher density greenfield development. The eastern and southern corridors are logical extension areas that will each provide 3,000 dwelling units. This big-picture plan identifies four priority development areas or urban growth nodes around the Queenstown town centre, Frankton Flats, Ladies Mile and the Southern Corridor where public investment in new and extended infrastructure will occur. The identification of these areas does not discount consideration of other areas for urban expansion.
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	<p>The proposed Fernhill Heights area is not identified as one of the four priority development areas. However, it does adjoin an established residential neighbourhood in close proximity to the Queenstown town centre, and the existing network of infrastructure and social and community amenities are able to be efficiently extended. The Spatial Plan employs a consolidated approach to growth which will be achieved by “growing within and around the existing urban areas of Queenstown.”¹</p> <p>Queenstown’s urban environment is constantly evolving, and growth options are regularly being explored and tested. Often, a logical development scenario (such as the Ladies Mile or the Southern Corridor growth areas) would have been incongruous with long-term visions less than 10 years previous.</p> <p>While Fernhill Heights sits beyond the UGB, it forms a logical extension of the existing Fernhill neighbourhood. Its proximity to infrastructure and integration with the proposed gondola transport system offer a compelling justification as a strategic, well-serviced urban extension delivering measurable public benefit.</p>
Future Urban Areas & Sequencing	<p>The Spatial Plan recognises that the costs of infrastructure investment is to be met by the developer of the land. The Council focus is towards efficient use and management of existing networks and discouraging new networks or extensions into areas that have not been previously considered. The extension of Fernhill Heights would utilise existing networks, which will be upgraded by the developer where necessary. There is strong alignment with the Council’s various infrastructure policy documents to better utilise existing capacity and avoid new networks that impose a cost on the community.</p>
Mode Shift: PT, Walking, Cycling First	<p>The gondola supports the Plan’s emphasis on mode shift toward public transport, walking, and cycling by providing a low-emission, high-capacity alternative to vehicle travel between the town centre and Fernhill Heights. The proposal therefore contributes to congestion reduction on the Frankton–CBD corridor and supports QLDC’s regional mobility objectives.</p>
Sustainable Tourism & Car-Free Destination	<p>In line with the Plan’s vision for sustainable tourism and car-free destinations, the gondola is positioned as both a visitor experience and a sustainable access route, encouraging reduced car dependency and supporting the shift to regenerative, low-impact tourism. The proposed transit-oriented neighbourhood design around the base station promotes higher-density, mostly residential development, walkability, and active transport integration.</p>
Blue–Green Network	<p>The proposal strengthens the district’s Blue–Green Network by restoring native habitats, controlling wilding species, and reconnecting ecological corridors across the Te Taumata o Hakitekura Reserve. This ecological enhancement aligns with the Spatial Plan’s priority for integrated urban growth that enhances biodiversity and open-space quality.</p>
Kāi Tahu Values & Wāhi Tūpuna	<p>The project reflects the Spatial Plan’s partnership principles through co-design with Kāi Tahu and integration of wāhi tūpuna and cultural interpretation throughout the corridor. These measures ensure visibility of mana whenua values and demonstrate the collaborative planning approach expected under the Plan.</p>

¹ QLDC, Spatial Plan, page 51

<p>Protected Areas & Constraints</p>	<p>The change in climate is explored at page 45 of the Spatial Plan, which likely involves a drier climate, and an increase in extreme weather events such as flooding or risks of fire. The proposed Fernhill Heights area will involve the removal of approximately 50 hectares of wilding pines trees that are immediately adjacent to the Fernhill residential community.</p> <p>The site is identified having ‘very high and extreme wilding infestation levels²’. These slopes contain heavy fuel loading close to an established urban area which makes this communities vulnerable to wildfire risk.</p> <p>The proposal to create an urban expansion into this area will reduce fire safety risk for the Fernhill community.</p> <p>Climate change will also result in high rainfall events, which will increase the risk of flooding. The steeply incised gullies that characterise the Fernhill Heights form part of the Fernhill and Sunshine Bay overland stormwater catchments. This existing stormwater catchment network will be extended into the Fernhill Heights area, which will include stormwater attenuation that will slow the velocity of overland flows entering the existing downstream network.</p>
<p>Economic Diversification & Community</p>	<p>The Spatial Plan and the Councils Economic Strategy recognise the need for economic diversification. The Funifor and Gondola proposals will reflect and engage with a wide target audience that will include expanding the recreational reach of locals, providing enhanced education opportunities for locals and new visitors, while also providing new and extended recreation opportunities for the visitor market. This proposal reflects Outcome 3 of the Spatial Plan – A sustainable tourism system’.</p>
<p>Summary</p>	<p>Overall, the Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates strong consistency with the Queenstown Lakes Spatial Plan 2021, particularly in relation to sustainable transport, ecological restoration, and Kāi Tahu partnership outcomes. While residential components beyond the UGB remain conditionally aligned, the project’s integration, low-emission infrastructure, and restoration commitments provide a clear basis for strategic consistency under the Spatial Plan framework.</p>

5.9 QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL – INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY 2024 - 2054

The **Queenstown Lakes Infrastructure Strategy 2024–2054** establishes a 30-year vision for sustainable, resilient, and low-carbon infrastructure investment.

Sustainable Infrastructure Vision and Integration

The Strategy seeks infrastructure that supports compact growth, emission reduction, and climate resilience. The proposal aligns closely through its **electrified gondola and funifor transport systems**, which deliver zero-emissions, reduce congestion, and connect directly with the town centre and wider transport network. These systems reflect the Strategy’s emphasis on **integrated, high-efficiency infrastructure** that supports both urban and tourism functions.

Consistent with the Strategy’s **strategic context**, the project demonstrates alignment with the Spatial Plan, Climate and Biodiversity Plan, and national planning frameworks by incorporating **renewable energy systems**,

² <https://whakatipuwilding.co.nz/fire-hazard>

	<p>stormwater management, and ecological restoration as core components of infrastructure delivery.</p>
<p>Resilience, Climate Action, and Funding</p>	<p>The proposal addresses the Strategy’s focus on natural hazard resilience through geotechnical stability design, erosion control, and wildfire management. Its use of low-carbon construction materials and adaptive engineering ensures long-term resilience to climate-related events.</p> <p>The project also advances the Strategy’s climate emergency and emissions reduction goals, offering a sustainable transport solution that complements Council’s 2050 net-zero targets. The housing and gondola infrastructure incorporate renewable energy and passive design systems, further enhancing alignment with regional climate objectives.</p> <p>The development model—privately funded but delivering public benefit—supports the Strategy’s public-private partnership and diversified funding approach, minimising pressure on Council’s capital expenditure while achieving shared community outcomes.</p>
<p>Environmental Management and Blue-Green Networks</p>	<p>The Strategy promotes blue-green infrastructure and integrated catchment management. The Fernhill Heights proposal contributes through native revegetation, slope stabilisation, and stormwater design that mimics natural hydrology. These measures enhance biodiversity, reduce runoff, and strengthen ecological resilience across the Te Taumata o Hakitekura Reserve.</p>
<p>Summary</p>	<p>Overall, the Fernhill Heights project demonstrates strong consistency with the Infrastructure Strategy 2024–2054. Its integrated, low-carbon transport and housing systems, private funding model, and blue-green infrastructure commitments meet the Strategy’s objectives for resilient, sustainable, and fiscally responsible infrastructure delivery. Conditional alignment applies only to long-term servicing integration within the Spatial Plan framework, but the project clearly advances QLDC’s strategic infrastructure vision for a climate-ready, connected district.</p>

<p>5.10 QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL – LONG TERM PLAN 2024 - 2034</p>	
<p>The Queenstown Lakes Long Term Plan (LTP) 2024–2034 outlines Council’s investment priorities over the next decade, focusing on infrastructure resilience, climate action, housing affordability, and community wellbeing.</p>	
<p>Strategic Framework and Climate Alignment</p>	<p>The LTP is guided by the Vision Beyond 2050 framework, seeking connected, resilient, and sustainable communities. The proposal’s electrified gondola system, compact housing design, and emphasis on native restoration align with this framework’s focus on climate resilience and sustainable mobility. The project provides infrastructure and recreation outcomes that contribute to a long-term reduction in carbon emissions while enhancing public accessibility to natural areas.</p> <p>Through integration with QLDC’s Climate and Biodiversity Plan, the project directly supports the LTP’s climate action goals—reducing transport emissions, restoring ecosystems, and enhancing slope stability and water management. The use of renewable energy systems and passive housing design reinforces alignment with Council’s net-zero targets for 2050.</p>

<p>Infrastructure, Housing, and Community Wellbeing</p>	<p>The LTP identifies the need for infrastructure that is sustainable, self-servicing, and affordable to maintain. The Fernhill Heights proposal satisfies these criteria through private funding mechanisms and connecting to and funding any local upgrades on Council networks. The projects infrastructure and transport integration address the LTP principle of “getting the basics right” by preventing additional pressure on public utilities while delivering substantial community benefit.</p> <p>Housing delivery can occur whilst other Fast Track projects await necessary and significant network extensions.</p> <p>The residential component, particularly the inclusion of affordable and workforce housing, aligns with the LTP’s social and economic wellbeing objectives. Public recreation, access, and ecological enhancement further contribute to community health and amenity, meeting the plan’s emphasis on holistic wellbeing outcomes.</p>
<p>Financial and Strategic Integration</p>	<p>By delivering infrastructure through a public-private partnership model, the project complements the LTP’s strategic investment approach. It leverages private capital to achieve public benefit, aligning with Council’s financial strategy to support essential infrastructure without overextending ratepayer funding.</p> <p>While conditional alignment applies to its position outside the current UGB, the project’s integrated servicing and sustainable transport links mitigate potential spatial inconsistencies.</p>
<p>Summary</p>	<p>The Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates strong consistency with the Queenstown Lakes District Council Long Term Plan 2024–2034. It advances Council’s vision for sustainable growth, climate action, and community wellbeing through low-carbon infrastructure, ecological restoration, and responsible private investment. Conditional alignment remains only for urban boundary and servicing integration, but the project clearly supports the LTP’s long-term objectives for a connected, climate-ready, and financially sustainable district.</p>

5.11 QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL – HOUSING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY ASSESSMENT 2025

The **Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment (HBA) 2025** evaluates Queenstown Lakes’ housing and business land supply in accordance with the **National Policy Statement on Urban Development (NPS-UD)**. It highlights ongoing **affordability pressures, housing shortfalls, and infrastructure constraints** within the Whakatipu Basin.

<p>Housing Affordability and Urban Integration</p>	<p>The HBA identifies that housing demand significantly exceeds supply, particularly for smaller, affordable dwellings suitable for key workers. The Fernhill Heights development directly addresses this by offering compact, energy-efficient typologies within a mixed-use framework that prioritises affordability and accessibility.</p> <p>Although located outside the current Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), the proposal’s strategic location adjoining the Fernhill neighbourhood—combined with its public benefit outcomes and integrated servicing—supports the HBA’s call for responsive, infrastructure-aligned urban growth. Partnerships with the Queenstown Lakes Community Housing Trust (QLCHT) and potential collaboration with Kāi Tahu further reinforce its alignment with regional housing equity objectives.</p>
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Infrastructure Capacity and Employment Land	<p>The HBA stresses the importance of ensuring sufficient infrastructure capacity to support growth without overloading Council networks. The Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates compliance through self-contained infrastructure design, renewable energy systems, and efficient stormwater management that minimise service demands.</p> <p>In addition, the project contributes to employment generation through gondola operations, construction, and tourism services, supporting the HBA's broader goal of balancing residential and commercial development to strengthen Queenstown's economic resilience.</p>
Compact Urban Form and Accessibility	<p>The development reinforces the HBA's emphasis on compact, connected urban form by integrating housing with sustainable public transport. The gondola system provides high-capacity, low-emission connectivity between Fernhill Heights, the town centre, and key recreation areas, enhancing accessibility while reducing vehicle reliance.</p>
Summary	<p>Overall, the Fernhill Heights project demonstrates strong consistency with the Housing and Business Development Capacity Assessment 2025. It contributes to housing affordability, improves infrastructure efficiency, and supports local employment while maintaining alignment with NPS-UD principles of compact, well-functioning urban environments. Conditional alignment applies to its UGB location, but the project clearly provides the public benefit, integrated transport, and affordability outcomes envisaged by the HBA.</p>

5.12 QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL – HOMES STRATEGY 2021 - 2031

The **Queenstown Lakes Homes Strategy 2021–2031** sets out a framework to improve access to **affordable, appropriate, and sustainable housing** across the district. It recognises the acute pressures of population growth, limited zoned land, and high housing costs, and establishes a coordinated approach involving **Council, Kāi Tahu, the Queenstown Lakes Community Housing Trust (QLCHT), and private partners**.

Affordable, Diverse, and Inclusive Housing	<p>The Strategy's core goal is to lift housing access for local residents and essential workers. The Fernhill Heights proposal contributes to this through diversified, compact dwelling types suited to local income levels and demographic needs. By dedicating a proportion of units to affordable or QLCHT-managed housing, the development directly addresses the Strategy's call for perpetual affordability through inclusionary zoning and public-private collaboration.</p> <p>The proposal's location is proximate to Queenstown's town centre and employment hub. It provides affordable convenient access to the workplace without reliance on private vehicles, addressing one of the key cost burdens for households. The mixed housing typologies are consistent with the Strategy's aim to deliver a balanced and resilient housing market that reflects local needs rather than investor-driven supply.</p>
Partnership, Kāi Tahu Engagement, and Governance	<p>Both tables in the Strategy emphasise Kāi Tahu partnership and shared governance as essential to achieving equitable housing outcomes. The Fernhill Heights project embraces this through early and ongoing engagement with Papatipu Rūnanga and the integration of mātauraka Māori within the design, naming, and interpretation of built and natural spaces. This partnership approach strengthens the project's alignment with the Strategy's</p>

	<p>cultural inclusion goals and supports long-term co-management of environmental and social outcomes.</p> <p>Governance mechanisms proposed for the housing delivery phase allow for collaboration with QLCHT and Kāi Tahu, ensuring that affordability and cultural values are maintained beyond initial development. These measures fulfil the Strategy’s objectives for multi-stakeholder governance and sustainable, community-led housing solutions.</p>
Sustainability, Climate Alignment, and Quality	<p>The Strategy calls for homes that are healthy, energy-efficient, and climate resilient, reducing long-term living costs and emissions. The Fernhill Heights design directly responds through passive solar design, low-carbon construction materials, and renewable energy integration. All dwellings will adopt sustainable water-sensitive design principles and efficient stormwater systems, ensuring alignment with the Council’s Climate and Biodiversity Plan and net-zero goals.</p> <p>By locating new housing within a transit-oriented development framework anchored by the gondola, the project supports mode shift and compact growth, aligning with the Strategy’s ambition to create walkable, low-emission neighbourhoods. The close integration between housing, recreation, and transport further enhances liveability and reinforces the Strategy’s spatial planning principles.</p>
Social, Cultural, and Economic Outcomes	<p>The project’s housing delivery model provides measurable social and economic benefits, including local employment opportunities, improved access to recreation and nature, and community-building through shared public spaces. Affordable housing options, designed to blend with the landscape and respect Kāi Tahu cultural values, contribute to community stability, identity, and belonging—key outcomes identified in the Strategy.</p> <p>By addressing workforce housing shortages and supporting sustainable tourism through nearby accommodation options, the proposal also advances the district’s economic resilience objectives.</p>
Summary	<p>The Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates strong and comprehensive consistency with the Queenstown Lakes Homes Strategy 2021–2031. It delivers on the Strategy’s central themes of affordability, sustainability, cultural partnership, and climate alignment through a public–private model that integrates housing, transport, and environmental restoration. Conditional alignment applies only to the site’s location outside the current UGB, but this is offset by clear public benefit, partnership delivery, and low-emission design outcomes.</p> <p>In total, the project embodies the Strategy’s vision for a connected, inclusive, and climate-resilient housing future that meets local needs while enhancing community wellbeing and environmental integrity.</p>

5.13 QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2015	
<p>The Queenstown Lakes Economic Development Strategy 2015 establishes a framework to diversify the district’s economy, strengthen community resilience, and protect Queenstown’s natural environment as its core economic asset.</p>	
Sustainable and Innovative Economic Growth	<p>The Strategy calls for economic growth that leverages innovation and environmental stewardship. The Fernhill Heights project embodies these principles through the creation of a low-emission gondola and funifor system, which integrates renewable energy technology, smart operations, and sustainable visitor management. The inclusion of a community education and learning space at the upper station further contributes to Queenstown’s knowledge-based economy by supporting tourism, environmental awareness, and local training opportunities.</p> <p>By investing in privately funded, climate-aligned infrastructure, the proposal supports the district’s transition toward a high-value, low-carbon visitor economy. The project’s regenerative approach—focusing on ecological restoration, native planting, and biodiversity enhancement—reinforces the Strategy’s goal of maintaining Queenstown’s environmental integrity as a cornerstone of its economic brand.</p>
Housing, Workforce Stability, and Local Benefits	<p>The Strategy recognises affordable housing and workforce stability as essential to long-term economic performance. The residential component of the Fernhill Heights project addresses this challenge by providing affordable and key-worker accommodation close to employment and transport networks. This proximity supports workforce retention and reduces travel emissions, aligning with both economic and social wellbeing objectives.</p> <p>The development also strengthens local supply chains and creates employment through construction, operations, and ecological management, contributing directly to community resilience and economic diversification.</p>
Kāi Tahu Partnership and Cultural Inclusion	<p>The project upholds the Strategy’s emphasis on Kāi Tahu partnership and cultural inclusion through co-design, bilingual interpretation, and integration of wāhi tūpuna values within the landscape and infrastructure design. These initiatives enhance Queenstown’s cultural identity and support inclusive growth consistent with the Treaty partnership principles recognised in Council’s broader policy framework.</p>
Environmental Integrity and Brand Protection	<p>Queenstown’s global reputation relies on preserving the scenic and ecological values that underpin its tourism economy. The project’s low-visibility design, limited footprint, and commitment to replanting and pest control demonstrate strong alignment with the Strategy’s aim to protect natural capital while enabling sustainable visitor access. By reducing pressure on congested town-centre infrastructure and providing year-round visitor dispersal, the gondola supports both economic and environmental sustainability. Recreation activities proposed are ‘on-brand’.</p>
Summary	<p>The Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates strong consistency with the Queenstown Lakes Economic Development Strategy 2015. It contributes to a resilient, innovative, and sustainable local economy through low-emission infrastructure, affordable housing, and environmental restoration. The project advances Queenstown’s position as a global leader in regenerative tourism and high-value, low-impact development, fully consistent with the Strategy’s vision for long-term prosperity grounded in environmental stewardship.</p>

	The Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates strong alignment with these objectives by delivering low-impact, high-value tourism infrastructure , supporting year-round employment , and embedding environmental restoration at the heart of its development model.
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5.14 QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL – SUSTAINING TOURISM GROWTH IN QUEENSTOWN 2018	
The Sustaining Tourism Growth in Queenstown 2018 report identifies tourism as the cornerstone of Queenstown's economy while warning that unmanaged growth could threaten environmental integrity and community wellbeing. It calls for strategic, infrastructure-led, and partnership-based solutions to sustain visitor numbers and protect natural values.	
Infrastructure and Visitor Management	The report highlights the urgent need for new infrastructure investment to manage visitor flows and reduce congestion in Queenstown. The gondola and funifor system directly respond to this priority by providing a high-capacity, low-emission transport link between the town centre and the Bowen Peak recreation area. This infrastructure alleviates pressure on roads, diversifies visitor experiences, and enhances year-round access to the Te Taumata o Hakitekura Reserve, all consistent with the report's call for sustainable visitor dispersal and reduced reliance on vehicle-based tourism. As a privately funded initiative , the project supports the report's emphasis on shared funding models between the public and private sectors to meet infrastructure demands without overburdening ratepayers.
Environmental Protection and Regenerative Tourism	The report stresses that environmental quality underpins the district's global tourism brand. The Fernhill Heights project demonstrates alignment through extensive wilding pine removal, native replanting, predator control, and restoration of ecological corridors . These measures will re-establish biodiversity and landscape integrity across the Reserve, ensuring tourism growth remains ecologically responsible. By integrating education, conservation, and recreation, the project exemplifies the principles of regenerative tourism — enabling visitors to contribute positively to the environment they experience. This approach strengthens Queenstown's reputation for sustainable and high-quality tourism experiences.
Housing, Community, and Economic Resilience	The report acknowledges that tourism's rapid growth has created housing pressures and social strain . The Fernhill Heights residential component addresses this by providing affordable and worker housing , improving local capacity to sustain the tourism workforce and community balance. Through design, funding, and management, the project links economic vitality with community wellbeing — aligning with the report's vision of shared prosperity.
Cultural Partnership and Social License	The proposal aligns with the report's recognition that tourism must maintain social license through genuine community and iwi partnership. Engagement with Kāi Tahu ensures cultural values and landscape identity are embedded in both the design and operation of the project. This partnership approach reinforces Queenstown's social and cultural resilience while advancing the district's long-term tourism strategy.
Summary	The Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates strong alignment with the Queenstown Lakes District Council's Sustaining Tourism Growth in

	<p>Queenstown 2018 report. It delivers environmentally restorative, low-emission infrastructure that supports visitor dispersal, enhances the district’s brand, and strengthens community and ecological resilience. Conditional consistency applies to growth boundary integration and housing scale, but overall, the project represents the kind of regenerative, partnership-led investment the report identifies as critical for Queenstown’s sustainable tourism future.</p>
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5.15 QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL – CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY PLAN 2025 - 2028	
<p>The Queenstown Lakes Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2025–2028 sets the district’s pathway toward net zero emissions, ecosystem restoration, and community resilience. It calls for transformational, partnership-based action aligning climate response with biodiversity enhancement.</p>	
<p>Climate Action, Low-Carbon Infrastructure, and Energy</p>	<p>The Plan prioritises reducing emissions through low-carbon transport, renewable energy, and efficient built environments. The project directly delivers on these objectives through its electrified gondola and funifor system, offering a zero-emission alternative to vehicle travel while linking housing, recreation, and tourism infrastructure.</p> <p>The development’s residential and tourism facilities will use passive design principles, renewable power integration, and energy-efficient materials, aligning with the Plan’s objectives for carbon-neutral construction and operations. Collectively, these measures advance Council’s 2030 emissions reduction and 2050 net-zero targets.</p>
<p>Biodiversity, Restoration, and Ecological Resilience</p>	<p>The proposal strongly aligns with the Plan’s Te Taiao – Natural Environment goals, which focus on protecting native species, controlling pests, and restoring ecosystem function. Through extensive wilding pine removal, predator fencing, and native replanting, the project delivers tangible biodiversity gains within the Te Taumata o Hakitekura Reserve.</p> <p>Revegetation and erosion control will improve soil stability and water quality, support ecological resilience and ensure long-term habitat recovery. The proposal’s landscape-scale restoration commitment exemplifies the Plan’s intent to integrate climate and biodiversity objectives in every development decision.</p>
<p>Kāi Tahu Partnership, Governance, and Community Engagement</p>	<p>The Plan embeds Te Ao Māori principles across climate and biodiversity action, requiring active collaboration with Kāi Tahu. The project’s co-design approach and integration of cultural narratives and naming directly support this partnership-based model.</p> <p>The development also aligns with the Plan’s governance and monitoring expectations by committing to transparent emissions reporting, biodiversity tracking, and adaptive management to ensure continual improvement over the project’s life cycle. Community engagement through restoration, education, and stewardship programmes strengthens collective responsibility for climate outcomes.</p>
<p>Regenerative Tourism and Local Resilience</p>	<p>By promoting regenerative tourism—where visitors contribute to conservation and education—the project supports the Plan’s call for a low-carbon economy that enhances biodiversity and social resilience. The integration of recreation, environmental restoration, and public access creates a visible demonstration of climate-positive development.</p>

Summary	The Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates strong alignment with the Queenstown Lakes Climate and Biodiversity Plan 2025–2028 . It combines climate mitigation, renewable infrastructure, and ecological regeneration in a single, cohesive model that supports both environmental and cultural outcomes. The project embodies the Plan’s vision for a carbon-neutral, biodiverse, and partnership-led district , setting a clear precedent for future sustainable development in Queenstown.
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5.16 QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL – INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2017

The **Queenstown Lakes Integrated Transport Strategy 2017** provides the district-wide framework for achieving a **safe, efficient, and low-emission transport network** that supports growth, accessibility, and environmental sustainability.

Low-Emission Mobility and Mode Shift	The Strategy prioritises reducing transport emissions by shifting travel from private vehicles to public transport, walking, and cycling. The project contributes directly to this outcome by providing a zero-emission, high-frequency gondola connection linking the town centre, Bowen Peak, and surrounding residential areas. This system relieves congestion along the Frankton–Queenstown corridor and facilitates modal shift for both residents and visitors. The gondola’s integration with walking and cycling trails further enhances connectivity and supports the Strategy’s focus on active transport and shared mobility options. Together, these initiatives advance Council’s objective of achieving an efficient, low-carbon network that improves mobility and reduces environmental impacts.
Infrastructure Integration and Resilience	The project aligns with the Strategy’s commitment to integrated infrastructure by coordinating transport design with land use, housing, and recreation planning. The gondola and associated facilities require minimal new roading, reducing construction impacts while providing long-term infrastructure resilience and efficiency. As a privately funded system , it complements Council’s broader network investment and supports the Strategy’s emphasis on public-private collaboration to deliver transport solutions that benefit the wider community. The project also incorporates robust hazard management, ensuring resilience to slope instability and climate-related risks.
Visitor Management and Economic Efficiency	The Strategy recognises that visitor traffic contributes significantly to congestion and emissions. The Fernhill Heights gondola addresses this by diverting tourist and commuter travel away from constrained road corridors, providing a sustainable access route to recreation and accommodation areas. This reduces road maintenance costs and aligns with the Strategy’s emphasis on managing transport demand and ensuring system efficiency.
Cultural Partnership and Governance	Consistent with the Strategy’s goal for inclusive governance, the proposal includes Kāi Tahu partnership in transport design and cultural interpretation, embedding mātauraka Māori values into the project. This supports the Strategy’s focus on shared decision-making and enhances the project’s cultural and environmental authenticity.
Summary	The Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates strong consistency with the Queenstown Lakes Integrated Transport Strategy 2017 . It delivers a low-

	<p>emission, multimodal transport solution that reduces congestion, supports climate goals, and enhances connectivity between urban and recreational nodes. Conditional alignment applies only to housing located outside the UGB, but the gondola infrastructure itself fully embodies the Strategy’s objectives for a sustainable, efficient, and resilient transport future for Queenstown.</p>
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5.17 QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL – MODE SHIFT PLAN 2022	
<p>The Queenstown Lakes Mode Shift Plan 2022 seeks to reduce car dependency and deliver a sustainable, multi-modal transport network that supports compact urban form and emissions reduction targets.</p>	
<p>Sustainable Transport and Mode Shift</p>	<p>The Plan’s primary objective is to reduce vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT) by encouraging public transport, walking, and cycling. The Fernhill Heights gondola directly contributes to this goal by offering continuous, low-emission public transport connecting the town centre, upper Fernhill and Bowen Peak. This creates a tangible shift from car-based travel toward shared, electric mobility.</p> <p>The project’s integration with walking trails and cycling routes enhances the wider network’s connectivity, providing sustainable access for both locals and visitors. Together, these measures advance the Plan’s ambition to make sustainable transport modes the preferred choice across the district.</p>
<p>Land Use Integration and Compact Growth</p>	<p>The Mode Shift Plan emphasises that land-use planning must reinforce public transport investment. The project achieves this through a Transit-Oriented Development approach, concentrating housing and community amenities around the gondola base and mid-stations. This design encourages compact, mixed-use growth and supports the Plan’s vision of well-connected neighbourhoods with reduced parking dependency and increased walkability. While the Fernhill Heights site sits outside the current Urban Growth Boundary, its proximity to existing infrastructure and integration with a sustainable transport corridor provide a strong case for conditional alignment under the Plan’s accessibility and connectivity principles.</p>
<p>Climate, Investment, and Behavioural Change</p>	<p>The proposal supports the Mode Shift Plan’s climate and emissions reduction targets, including the district-wide goal of reducing vehicle kilometres by 20% by 2035. The gondola’s electrified operation contributes directly to decarbonisation efforts, while its integration with Council’s planned public transport network offers scalable, long-term benefits.</p> <p>The project also reflects the Plan’s investment and funding innovation objectives by delivering privately funded transport infrastructure that yields public benefits, easing pressure on Council budgets while advancing community goals. Furthermore, by offering a convenient and scenic alternative to car use, the gondola fosters behavioural change consistent with the Plan’s travel demand management strategies.</p>
<p>Summary</p>	<p>The Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates strong alignment with the Queenstown Lakes Mode Shift Plan 2022. It delivers a sustainable, integrated transport system that supports compact growth, reduces emissions, and enhances mobility through innovative private investment. Conditional alignment applies only to its UGB position, but overall, the project fully embodies the Plan’s objectives for a low-carbon, accessible, and multimodal transport future for Queenstown.</p>

5.18 QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL – PARKS AND OPEN SPACES STRATEGY 2021	
The Queenstown Lakes Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021 establish a long-term vision for creating a connected, resilient, and ecologically rich network of public parks and reserves that enhances recreation, biodiversity, and community wellbeing.	
Recreation, Access, and Public Benefit	<p>The Strategy promotes diverse and accessible open spaces that balance recreation with environmental protection. The Fernhill Heights gondola provides inclusive, low-emission access to the Bowen Peak and Ben Lomond reserves, connecting to existing walking and mountain bike trails while minimising roading and surface disturbance. This directly supports the Strategy’s objectives for connectivity and active recreation that enable community and visitor engagement with nature.</p> <p>The proposal enhances public access and enjoyment of the reserve lands while managing visitor flows to prevent overcrowding and protect natural character. The inclusion of interpretive and educational elements encourages environmental stewardship consistent with Council’s open-space management goals.</p>
Ecological Restoration and Landscape Integrity	<p>The project contributes directly to the Strategy’s focus on biodiversity protection and ecological connectivity by implementing large-scale wilding pine removal, native planting, and pest control. These measures restore native ecosystems and improve slope stability, ensuring the reserve functions as part of Queenstown’s wider Blue–Green Network.</p> <p>By designing all infrastructure to be visually recessive and low-impact, the proposal maintains the natural landscape character that defines the district’s open space values. Construction practices, including erosion control and sediment management, ensure ongoing alignment with the Strategy’s environmental protection outcomes.</p>
Kāi Tahu Partnership and Cultural Integration	<p>The project aligns with the Strategy’s recognition of Kāi Tahu partnership and Te Ao Māori principles in open-space governance. Co-design processes, bilingual naming, and cultural interpretation along the gondola corridor will embed mātauraka Māori into both recreation and conservation experiences. These actions reinforce the Strategy’s objective for collaborative, culturally grounded park management.</p>
Resilience, Stewardship, and Implementation	<p>Consistent with the Strategy’s climate and resilience policies, the proposal integrates vegetation restoration and slope stabilisation to protect against erosion and wildfire risk. Long-term ecological monitoring and adaptive management commitments fulfil the Strategy’s call for transparent performance tracking and community stewardship.</p>
Summary	<p>The Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates strong consistency with the Queenstown Lakes Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2021. It provides sustainable recreation access, ecological restoration, and cultural integration within the Te Taumata o Hakitekura Reserve.</p> <p>Conditional alignment applies only to the intensity of visitor activity, but the project’s design and management approach clearly advance the Strategy’s vision for connected, enduring, and ecologically resilient open spaces across the district.</p>

5.19 QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL – RESERVE MANAGEMENT PLAN 2025 (TE TAUMATA O HAKITEKURA BEN LOMOND AND TE TAPUNUI QUEENSTOWN HILL)	
The Reserve Management Plan 2025 (Te Taumata o Hakitekura / Ben Lomond / Te Tapunui) sets out Queenstown Lakes District Council’s framework for managing public reserves to protect ecological, cultural, and landscape values while enabling sustainable recreation and community access .	
Vision, Purpose, and Recreation Integration	The Plan emphasises protecting the intrinsic values of the reserves while providing for low-impact, inclusive recreation . The gondola and funifor system enhance public accessibility to the Bowen Peak and Ben Lomond areas without the need for intrusive new roading, aligning with the Plan’s goal to facilitate sustainable access and enjoyment of the reserve environment. Visitor management will ensure recreation remains consistent with conservation values. Interpretive facilities and educational programmes at stations and trailheads further promote stewardship and understanding of the reserve’s cultural and ecological significance.
Ecological Restoration and Environmental Protection	The proposal delivers on the Plan’s ecological restoration and wilding control priorities through staged removal of pest vegetation, native revegetation, and slope stabilisation measures. These efforts improve biodiversity, reduce erosion, and strengthen ecological resilience, fully consistent with the Plan’s environmental management objectives. The project’s design avoids sensitive habitats, applies best-practice stormwater and sediment control, and maintains water quality across the One Mile Creek catchment, reflecting alignment with the Plan’s Te Mana o te Wai provisions.
Kāi Tahu Partnership and Cultural Integration	The Plan identifies Kāi Tahu kaitiakitaka as central to reserve management. The project integrates this through genuine partnership, co-design of landscape and cultural interpretation , and bilingual naming throughout the gondola corridor. These measures enhance cultural visibility and reflect the reserve’s identity as a place of environmental and spiritual significance.
Landscape, Built Form, and Natural Hazards	The Plan requires that built form remains visually recessive and complements natural character. The gondola infrastructure achieves this through low-profile architecture, dark, non-reflective materials , and minimal skyline intrusion. Robust geotechnical design and wildfire resilience measures meet the Plan’s natural hazard management objectives.
Community, Stewardship, and Conditional Use	The proposal also supports the Plan’s objectives for community involvement and volunteer stewardship , offering opportunities for local partnerships in restoration and monitoring programmes. While conditional alignment applies to the commercial recreation provisions , the gondola’s design and operation can demonstrate a clear net ecological and public benefit , satisfying the Plan’s commercial recreation policy criteria.
Summary	The Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates strong consistency with the Queenstown Lakes District Council Reserve Management Plan 2025 . It achieves the balance of protection, recreation, and partnership envisioned for the Te Taumata o Hakitekura, Ben Lomond, and Te Tapunui reserves. Conditional alignment applies only to commercial recreation activities, but the overall approach clearly advances the Plan’s objectives for culturally grounded, ecologically restorative, and sustainably managed reserves .

5.20 QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL – PROPOSED DISTRICT PLAN – CHAPTER 3 – STRATEGIC DIRECTION	
Chapter 3 of the Proposed District Plan (PDP) establishes the overarching strategic outcomes that guide all other PDP provisions, seeking to balance urban growth, environmental protection, cultural values, and community wellbeing .	
Compact Growth, Urban Integration, and Infrastructure Efficiency	The PDP’s strategic direction seeks a compact and connected urban form , limiting expansion beyond defined UGBs except where public benefit and integration are demonstrated. The Fernhill Heights proposal meets this test by functioning as a logical and well-serviced extension of the existing Fernhill neighbourhood , with the gondola providing a direct, sustainable link to Queenstown’s urban core. Through integrated transport and self-servicing infrastructure, the proposal reduces car dependence and supports the PDP’s goals for coordinated land use and infrastructure investment . Although partially inconsistent with the UGB policy, its clear public transport and community benefits provide a basis for conditional alignment.
Environmental Protection, Landscape, and Rural Character	The Plan’s strategic outcomes prioritise protection of Outstanding Natural Landscapes (ONLs) and rural character . The project addresses these requirements through recessive architectural design, vegetation restoration , and minimisation of visual intrusion , ensuring landscape integrity is maintained. The surrounding wilding pine environment currently detracts from rural character, and the proposed restoration will improve both visual and ecological values, reinforcing alignment with the PDP’s environmental objectives.
Cultural Values and Tangata Whenua Partnership	The Plan acknowledges Tangata Whenua / Kāi Tahu as key partners in resource management. The project reflects this principle through co-design processes, integration of cultural interpretation , and protection of wāhi tūpuna values . These actions demonstrate practical application of kaitiakitaka and tikaka , consistent with the PDP’s recognition of Kāi Tahu as Treaty partners in shaping development outcomes.
Economic Resilience, Visitor Economy, and Climate	Chapter 3 promotes a resilient local economy that supports the visitor sector within environmental limits. The gondola and associated infrastructure exemplify this principle by facilitating sustainable access to recreation areas and diversifying the tourism offering without degrading natural values. The project also supports low-emission development patterns and hazard resilience through electrified transport, passive housing design, and robust geotechnical planning, fully consistent with the PDP’s climate and hazard mitigation policies.
Implementation and Cross-Chapter Consistency	Chapter 3 outcomes must inform interpretation across all plan provisions. The Fernhill Heights proposal has been developed to demonstrate cross-consistency with landscape, transport, biodiversity, and cultural provisions in subsequent PDP chapters.
Summary	The Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates strong consistency with the Chapter 3: Strategic Direction . It delivers compact, sustainable growth, supports Kāi Tahu partnership, and restores landscape integrity. Conditional alignment applies to its UGB location, but the project’s integrated transport,

	environmental enhancement, and public benefit outcomes align closely with the strategic intent of the PDP to promote a sustainable, connected, and resilient district .
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5.21 QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL – PROPOSED DISTRICT PLAN – CHAPTER 4 – URBAN DEVELOPMENT	
Chapter 4 of the PDP provides the detailed policy direction for achieving compact, well-functioning, and efficient urban environments , consistent with the NPS-UD.	
Urban Growth Boundaries and Compact Form	The PDP’s Objective 4.2.1 establishes UGBs as the primary tool for managing urban expansion. While the Fernhill Heights site is outside the existing boundary, the proposal presents a strategic, contiguous, and serviced extension of the Fernhill neighbourhood that functions as a natural continuation of the urban form. The proposal demonstrates exceptional public benefit through its privately funded gondola system, affordable housing options, and landscape restoration, all of which align with the Plan’s intent to balance growth with environmental limits. The compact design and proximity to Queenstown’s urban core support the PDP’s compact growth and connectivity principles , mitigating potential spatial inconsistency.
Integration, Infrastructure, and Connectivity	Chapter 4 emphasises integration between land use, transport, and infrastructure . The Fernhill Heights development embodies this integration by linking new housing and recreation areas directly with the electrified gondola network, reducing reliance on private vehicles and minimising roading requirements. The project’s self-servicing infrastructure —including stormwater management, renewable energy use, and erosion control—demonstrates efficiency consistent with PDP policies for infrastructure coordination and sustainable design. Its contribution to the district’s broader mode shift strategy further strengthens alignment with Council’s long-term transport goals.
Environmental and Landscape Protection	The Plan requires that urban development outside UGBs avoid adverse effects on ONLs and biodiversity. The proposal addresses these provisions through recessive architectural forms, low-impact construction, and native replanting , ensuring that landscape and ecological integrity are enhanced rather than diminished. The project’s environmental management approach—integrating wilding removal, native restoration, and predator control—supports Chapter 4’s directive to maintain and improve environmental quality in areas experiencing growth pressure.
Design Quality, Climate, and Resilience	The proposal adheres to the PDP’s principles of high-quality, sustainable urban design , incorporating passive energy use, climate-resilient materials, and low-carbon construction . Its design reduces greenhouse gas emissions while enhancing liveability and accessibility—outcomes consistent with Chapter 4’s climate and energy efficiency objectives.
Summary	The Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates strong conditional consistency with Chapter 4: Urban Development . While the residential component lies outside the current UGB, the project advances the chapter’s key outcomes by

	delivering integrated, sustainable, and well-connected development that supports compact form, low-emission transport, and environmental enhancement. The proposal therefore reflects the spirit and intent of Chapter 4's policies for balanced, future-ready urban growth.
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5.22 QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL – PROPOSED DISTRICT PLAN – CHAPTER 5 – TANGATA WHENUA

Chapter 5 of the Proposed District Plan (PDP) recognises Kāi Tahu as mana whenua and establishes policies that embed Treaty partnership, <i>kaitiakitaka</i> , and cultural landscape protection across all aspects of resource management.	
Treaty Partnership and Engagement	The PDP requires genuine partnership with Kāi Tahu, ensuring mana whenua values are embedded from project conception through to implementation. The Fernhill Heights proposal aligns with this direction through establishing and maintaining ongoing engagement with Papatipu Rūnanga , and through the inclusion of a Cultural Values Assessment (CVA) to guide design, environmental management, and monitoring. This collaboration ensures that decision-making reflects Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles , fulfilling the PDP's expectation that mana whenua perspectives inform planning and consent processes at every stage.
Kaitiakitaka, Tikaka, and Taonga Protection	The proposal applies kaitiakitaka in practice through the restoration of mauri and biodiversity within the Te Taumata o Hakitekura Reserve. Large-scale wildling removal, native replanting, and predator control demonstrate tangible outcomes that maintain ecological health and reflect Kāi Tahu stewardship values. Built elements are designed to be recessive, low-profile, and integrated with the landscape , avoiding adverse effects on wāhi tūpuna, taonga species, and statutory acknowledgement areas . Cultural interpretation and bilingual naming across the site enhance the visibility and mana of Kāi Tahu within the built environment, directly addressing the PDP's objective for cultural expression through design.
Mahika Kai, Nohoanga, and Access	Consistent with Chapter 5 provisions for mahika kai and nohoanga , the project restores indigenous habitats and improves access to customary resources by protecting waterways, stabilising slopes, and enhancing the quality of riparian and native forest environments. These outcomes ensure that the land continues to support both ecological and cultural wellbeing.
Sustainable Land Use and Economic Partnership	The PDP encourages Kāi Tahu participation in sustainable economic and land-use activities. The Fernhill Heights project supports this by providing potential opportunities for iwi involvement in tourism, restoration management, and education programmes , integrating cultural and economic benefits in a manner consistent with Te Ao Māori principles of reciprocity and guardianship.
Summary	The Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates strong alignment with the Queenstown Lakes District Council Proposed District Plan – Chapter 5: Tangata Whenua . It operationalises Treaty partnership through co-design, protects cultural landscapes and taonga species, and restores ecological mauri across the reserve. Conditional alignment applies only to final partnership governance arrangements, but overall, the project exemplifies the chapter's

	vision for collaborative, culturally grounded, and environmentally restorative development within Kāi Tahu ancestral landscapes.
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5.23 QUEENSTOWN LAKES DISTRICT COUNCIL – PROPOSED DISTRICT PLAN – CHAPTER 6 – LANDSCAPES AND RURAL CHARACTER	
	Chapter 6 of the Proposed District Plan (PDP) seeks to protect the Outstanding Natural Landscapes (ONLs), Outstanding Natural Features (ONFs), and Rural Character Landscapes (RCLs) that define Queenstown’s distinctive identity. It manages development in these areas to ensure natural, cultural, and visual values are sustained for future generations.
Protection of ONLs, Natural Features, and Visual Integrity	The project site lies within the visual catchment of the Ben Lomond and Bowen Peak ONL backdrop. The proposal’s design responds directly to Chapter 6’s requirement that new development “ maintain landscape legibility and natural character ” by employing low-profile, recessive structures and careful site selection that avoids skyline intrusion. The gondola infrastructure qualifies as regionally significant , functionally dependent on its location, and consistent with PDP provisions that allow essential public or renewable infrastructure in ONLs where adverse effects are appropriately mitigated. Through visual screening, earth-coloured materials, and limited night lighting, the proposal preserves the landscape’s coherence and scenic amenity.
Rural Character and Integration with Natural Environment	The PDP requires that rural landscapes retain their openness and natural character . While the introduction of housing on the Fernhill Heights ridgeline introduces some built form, it is clustered and visually contained , reducing cumulative visual clutter. The proposed wilding pine removal and native replanting restore indigenous vegetation cover and strengthen the landscape’s ecological authenticity, offsetting existing degradation and enhancing rural character consistency.
Tangata Whenua Values and Cultural Landscape Integrity	Chapter 6 recognises Tangata Whenua values as integral to landscape management. The project embeds these through co-design with Kāi Tahu, bilingual naming , and interpretation that reflects wāhi tūpuna and traditional narratives associated with the site. This approach ensures cultural visibility and supports the Plan’s goal of maintaining the spiritual and ancestral significance of ONLs and RCLs.
Environmental Enhancement, Hazards, and Resilience	The proposal aligns with the chapter’s emphasis on environmental enhancement by restoring native vegetation and stabilising steep slopes vulnerable to erosion. The use of geotechnical engineering, erosion control, and wildfire management contributes to the long-term resilience of the landscape, addressing both natural hazard and climate adaptation policies within the PDP.
Summary	The Fernhill Heights proposal demonstrates strong conditional consistency with Chapter 6: Landscapes and Rural Character . The gondola component fully aligns with provisions for regionally significant, low-impact infrastructure, while the residential element remains conditionally aligned pending statutory justification for development beyond the UGB. Overall, the project achieves the chapter’s objectives by preserving landscape integrity, restoring ecological values, and embedding cultural partnership within a carefully managed alpine environment.

6.0 POLICY SUMMARY

- 6.1 This wide array of relevant policy documents often contains over-lapping policy directions. These have been distilled into the summary below.
- 6.2 The policy statements and their respective objectives and policies cannot be read in isolation nor prioritised. A holistic review of the matters is needed to achieve a balanced assessment.

Urban Growth Boundaries and Spatial Form

- 6.3 The plans and policy statements collectively encourage compact, transit-oriented growth within Urban Growth Boundaries
- 6.4 The PDP contains mapped Urban Growth Boundaries that are based upon the extent of existing urban zone areas. Policies in Chapter 4 of the PDP focus urban development within UGB's and direct that rural land outside of UGB's should not be used for urban development until a plan change amends the location of that line, and zones additional land for urban development. The policy direction is consistent with avoiding ad hoc urban developments.
- 6.5 However, the PDP (Policy 4.2.1.2) also recognises that there are circumstances where it may be appropriate to extend development beyond the UGB, where adjacent to the existing larger urban areas.
- 6.6 In defining the UGB, the Plan relies upon the Housing Development Capacity Assessment for Queenstown Lakes District 2021, that identifies the existing urban environment and the indicative future expansion area. That mapping is not wholly consistent with indicating where future urban growth might occur.
- 6.7 For example, the mapped urban expansion area includes 85 hectares of flat land in the southern corridor that has been registered with the QEII Trust, and is not able to be used for any future urban development. Similarly, the existing urban environment mapping includes the Queenstown Airport and surrounds where housing is prohibited. The existing urban environment also includes other Council owned land (Commonage Reserve areas) within the UGB that are managed as public access areas and contain popular mountain bike trails.
- 6.8 The proposed urban expansion areas in the HBA '21 include the eastern and southern corridors. Neither of these growth corridors have access to the wastewater network, and significant capital works are required to lay new services to these neighbourhoods, as funding allows, which will delay the provision of housing, and run the risk of not achieving the Council's housing bottom lines.
- 6.9 The Three Waters Servicing Feasibility Report for Fernhill Heights (Appendix 3) confirms that there is current residual capacity within the Fernhill and Sunshine Bay gravity networks, and that off-peak capacity could be utilised. Fernhill Heights residential neighbourhood could connect into existing network infrastructure.
- 6.10 The Urban Growth boundaries in the District Plan are a snapshot of the current urban extent. The District Plan anticipates that these boundaries will change over time, and provides a pathway for that process to occur, where 1st schedule processes are followed. In seeking approval to develop land outside of the UGB, through the Fast-Track process, it is relevant to consider the UGB framework (Policy 4.2.1.4), which includes consideration of:

- the anticipated medium term demand for housing and business land within the District assuming a mix of housing densities and form;
- ensuring the ongoing availability of a competitive land supply for urban purposes;
- the constraints on development of the land such as its topography, its ecological, heritage, cultural or landscape significance; or the risk of natural hazards limiting the ability of the land to accommodate growth;
- the need to make provision for the location and efficient operation of infrastructure, commercial and industrial uses, and a range of community activities and facilities;
- a compact and efficient urban form;
- avoiding sporadic urban development in rural areas;
- minimising the loss of the productive potential and soil resource of rural land; and
- a future development strategy for the District that is prepared in accordance with the National Policy Statement on Urban Development Capacity.

6.11 Expansion of the UGB to enable Fernhill Heights is consistent with these criteria. Fernhill Heights is adjacent to the existing Fernhill urban area and is not a ‘sporadic’ urban development.

Landscape

6.12 The Fernhill Heights site is located within the Outstanding Natural Landscape that extends around the edge of the Queenstown urban area. The seven ONL Policies in Chapter 6 of the PDP seek to protect landscape values, and discourage development.

6.13 The landscape assessment confirms that the Fernhill Heights area will be visible from several existing urban communities, and from public vantage points. However, that expansion will always be visually contained by the larger surrounding landform of the Ben Lomond mountain range. The scale of this feature is demonstrated in the visualisations prepared by Patch Landscape (Appendix 17). As the various stages of Fernhill Heights develop and the landscape planting matures, the visual effects will soften, and the urban form will integrate into the wider Fernhill residential community.

6.14 The landscape effects assessment recognises that the project will introduce a distinct urban patterning that is described as “transformative” which will result in a range of effects. The assessment recognises that this change is appropriately located and will be mitigated by a range of other offsets such as restorative and public-access initiatives, the establishment of a predator-free sanctuary, extensive wilding pine removal, reinstatement of indigenous forest communities, that will “provide meaningful contributions to the long-term enhancement of natural character”.

6.15 Although this project will introduce development in the ONL, the potential effects on landscape overall are considered acceptable. The coherence and values of this part of the ONL will be retained.

Housing Affordability and Diversity

6.16 The project provides for up to 175 alpine-style chalets comprising 1,333 residential units, of which 5% will be committed to the Queenstown Lakes Community Housing Trust (Appendix 13), and a further 50% will be retained for essential worker accommodation. The provision of additional housing that is accessible to the urban centre of Queenstown supports the functioning of the community and implements the Homes Strategy and Joint Housing Action Plans objectives of prioritising secure, affordable workforce housing.

Infrastructure Integration and Mode Shift

- 6.17 The Three Waters (Appendix 3) reporting confirms that there is currently network capacity for the staged development of Fernhill Heights. Preliminary advice is that connection to those existing networks is feasible and will require limited upgrades, to be funded by the developer.
- 6.18 The transport and infrastructure strategies (RPS, Mode Shift Plan, Integrated Transport Strategy, Infrastructure Strategy) support projects that reduce private-car dependency. Abley Consultants (Appendix 5) confirm that the location of the site together with the mix of sustainable transport options (walking, cycling, public transport and ropeway systems) provides “a strong foundation for integrated and resilient transport options”. There is also the potential for integration with other proposed ropeway systems that are currently advocated by others.

Kāi Tahu Partnership

- 6.19 The iwi management plans and council frameworks (Spatial Plan, JHAP, RPS, PDP) require Kāi Tahu partnership in design, governance, and monitoring.
- 6.20 The relationship with Iwi needs to establish and evolve. The applicant has demonstrated a commitment to engaging in a 14-step plan recommended by Mr Rewi at Appendix 12. Elements of road naming and cultural interpretation opportunities will be developed over time, and through engagement with Iwi. This relationship needs to grow and evolve as the staged development progresses.

Biodiversity & Indigenous Vegetation Restoration

- 6.21 The NPS-IB, iwi plans, RPS, and QLDC Climate Plan all require net biodiversity gain.
- 6.22 The reporting in Appendix 9 confirms that the habitats of high and significant ecological value are likely present within the project footprint. Whilst there will be some unavoidable impact on these habitats, the overall biodiversity gains will be significant and beneficial.

Community Benefit & Economic Resilience

- 6.23 The PDP, Economic Development Strategy and Homes Strategy emphasise balanced growth, visitor-resident integration, and resilience.
- 6.24 This includes recognising the contribution that tourism makes to the local and regional economy and enabling ongoing support as those industries diversify. The gondola project will build upon the existing tourist networks, creating new employment opportunities and generally broadening the economic base.

Sustainability, Climate & Emissions Reduction

- 6.25 The QLDC and ORC strategies emphasise a transition toward a low-emissions, climate-resilient future by promoting compact urban form, sustainable transport, and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions across key sectors. Both councils prioritise climate adaptation, natural hazard resilience, and the protection of environmental values, recognising that long-term sustainability requires integrated land-use planning, efficient infrastructure, and collaborative regional action.

- 6.26 The project aims to place an emphasis on achieving a sustainable, low-emission development that demonstrates climate resilience.

Conclusion

- 6.27 There is a national, regional and local policy framework that supports the provision of compact urban centres where infrastructure is developed efficiently and affordable meaningful and timely housing outcomes and cultural partnerships are achieved together with innovative low-carbon efficient transport networks, where landscape, recreational, cultural and ecological values can be enhanced. Restoring the Reserve – Powerhouse to Peak Cable Cars and Fernhill Heights Development achieves those outcomes.
- 6.28 There remains a policy tension where of development occurs outside the UGB on land categorised as ONL. However on balance, and taking into account the wide range of policy documents referenced in this assessment, it is concluded that Fernhill Heights remains an area that is suitable for growth and expansion of Queenstown residential community, presenting benefits for both resident and visitor communities.
- 6.28 The gondola and funifor are electric systems that will enhance transport mobility between Queenstown, Fernhill and Bowen Peak, benefiting a wide audience of residents and visitors. The recreation, tourism, cultural and ecological restoration benefit will outweigh any adverse effects.