



Appendix

05

Powerhouse Fast-track Application

Preliminary Transport Assessment



Prepared by Abley Ltd

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15 December 2025

26 November 2025

Guy Hingston
Bowen Peak Limited

Attention: Guy Hingston

TRANSMITTAL: Email

Dear Guy

Bowen Peak Limited's Restoring the Reserve – Powerhouse to Peak Cable Car & Fernhill Heights Fast-track Referral Application

Thank you for inviting me to provide feedback on the traffic and transportation aspects of the Fernhill Heights Fast Track Referral Application. I understand that Bowen Peak Limited have previously lodged a referral application under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024 which was declined, and with respect to transportation matters there were specific concerns raised in relation to “*a conflict with QLDC’s Arterial Bypass*”.

I have undertaken a high-level assessment of the transport elements and extent to which I can support the proposal as amended and included in the updated referral application. This letter documents the findings of my assessment.

By way of background, I am a transportation professional with over 25 years of experience. I have recently received written approval from Queenstown Lakes District Council (QLDC) as a “*Suitably Qualified and Experienced Person*” in relation to undertaking and reviewing traffic and transportation assessments in Queenstown-Lake District. I have:

- been admitted as a Member of Engineering New Zealand (including the Transportation and NZMUGS sub-groups)
- been Chartered as a professional member of the Institute of Logistics and Transport
- been accredited as an independent hearing commissioner
- represented QLDC and NZTA in the Queenstown-Lakes District in hearings as a transportation expert witness
- managed QLDC’s transportation model for the past 13 years
- advised QLDC in a range of areas including spatial planning, parking advice, transport planning and modelling over this 13-year period
- provided transportation engineering and planning advice including as an expert witness to a range of other public and private sector clients including Auckland Transport, Auckland Council, Taupo District Council, Selwyn District Council, Central Otago District Council, Fulton Hogan, Foodstuffs, Fonterra, Ports of Auckland and many others.

Transport Elements of the Application

I have reviewed the material shared in relation to the proposal and consider that the key transportation elements are as follows:

- Approximately 1,333 apartments are to be established to the north of existing residential area as ‘Fernhill Heights’ – these will be established in 175 chalet-style buildings each including approximately 8 dwellings with provision of one parking space per dwelling.

- New roads of 9m, 15m and 20m legal width are to be constructed to access the dwellings with grades limited to no more than 1:8 and some limited parking available for visitors.
- Construction and operation of a ropeway system with two gondolas and a Funifor¹ to provide frequent high-capacity access from the One Mile Powerhouse Reserve up to Fernhill Heights, the Ben Lomond saddle and Bowen Peak for residents and recreational purposes, including four ropeway stations.
- Enhanced walking and mountain bike tracks including the construction of a boardwalk from the Powerhouse Precinct up to Fernhill Heights to re-open the currently closed One Mile Walking Track.
- Development of a hospitality facility and ancillary retail to the base gondola station adjacent to Lake Esplanade and Fernhill roundabout.
- Provision of a small carpark adjacent to the Gondola base station for priority use, with sealed access directly off the roundabout.
- A flexible approach to working with QLDC in the transition towards a post-Stage 3 Arterial environment including bus stop and potential multi-story car park (NB the car park not part of this application).
- Potential future conference centre (NB this is not part of this application).

I undertook a site visit on Friday 17th October 2025 and observed the connecting roads to access Fernhill Heights including the location of the proposed accesses off Lochy Road and Greenstone Place. My site visit included a walkover of the proposed gondola location including observing the site in relation to the intended location of the Arterial stage 3 designation and existing Fernhill roundabout.

Strategic Transport Context

The proposed development is situated in an area that is not subject to the transportation constraints present on SH6 east, SH6 south, and the Arthurs Point corridor. Unlike the Ladies Mile and Jacks Point corridors, where options to increase vehicle access capacity to Frankton and Queenstown are limited, the transport network in this vicinity currently has greater capacity to accommodate additional housing. Planned projects, including the future development of the QLDC Stage 2 and 3 arterials, are expected to further increase network capacity in this area.

The development is anticipated to occur over an extended timeframe, with an indicative program included as part of the application presenting a 28-year horizon. Staging is planned to enable an integrated approach to infrastructure delivery. For example, residential development is expected to commence in the eastern portion of the site concurrently with the establishment of the Powerhouse Gondola. Projected residential uptake is approximately 50 apartments per annum, which allows time for supporting infrastructure to be planned, designed, and delivered as the development progresses.

The site's proximity to the town centre, combined with the proposed gondola and internal walkway network, provides opportunities for a substantial number of dwellings to be located within walking distance of central Queenstown. My spatial analysis of walking accessibility (refer to Figure 1) indicates that much of the town centre is within a 15-minute walk from the base gondola station. This arrangement is expected to facilitate walking access and reduce reliance on private vehicle travel, similar to the existing gondola on Brecon Street.

Cycle access is also available along Lake Esplanade via an off-road path, with further opportunities identified through the Whakatipu Active Travel Network Business Case² including improvements between Queenstown and Fernhill. There are several bike hire stores available in the town centre which further support access via biking.

¹ A Funifor is similar to a gondola. It has two parallel carrier cables at a wide distance from each other, which allows it to operate reliably in extreme weather conditions. Funifors feature cabins with independent drives rather than relying on a central rope station.

² <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/services/transport-and-parking/way-to-go/whakatipu-active-travel-network/>

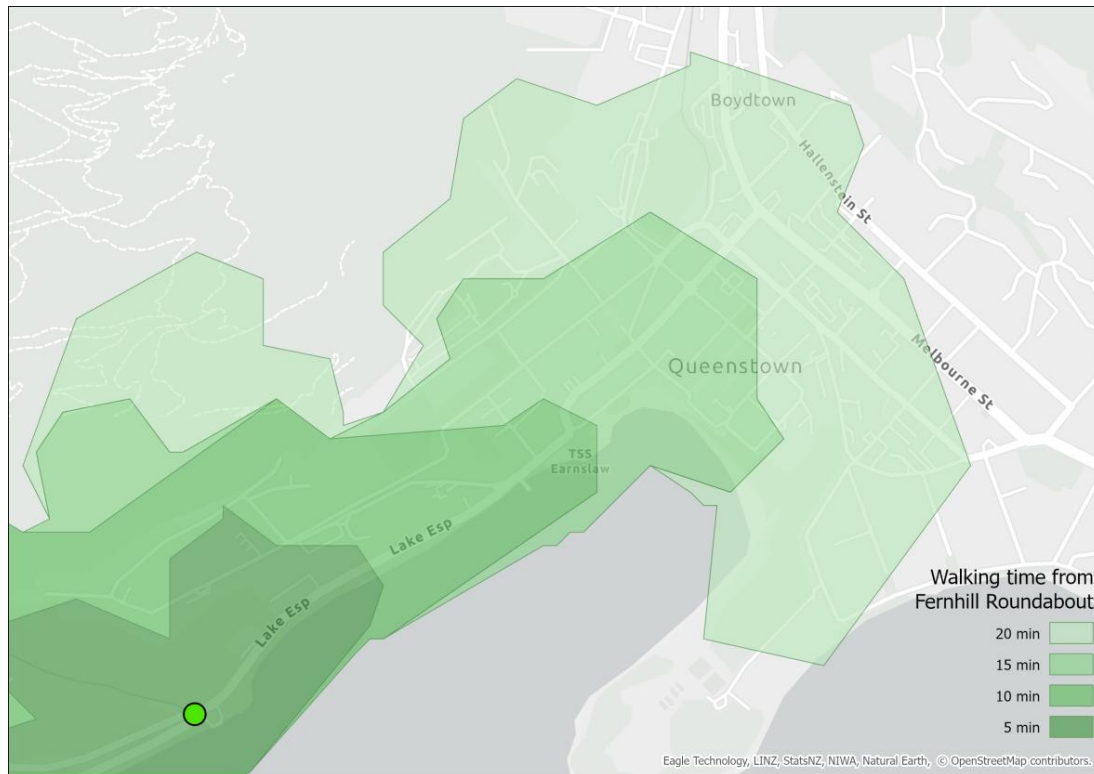


Figure 1 Walk distance isochrones from site

The Remarkables Park to Sunshine Bay bus service runs past the site every 15 minutes with bus stops currently located a short walk away. There would be scope to install bus stops adjacent to the site for excellent public transport access, and to extend the service to Fernhill Heights as the internal roads can be designed to provide for bus and coach tracking and provision of bus infrastructure (shelters and seats). The Queenstown Bay terminus to access ferry services is also a ten-minute walk from the site.

Bowen Peak Limited has indicated an intention to provide frequent or on-demand shuttle services between the town centre and the site. I support this approach as it would supplement existing public transport options and encourage the use of sustainable transport modes.

In my view this development aligns with the vision of the Queenstown Integrated Programme Business Case (which I was the lead author of), which seeks to shift travel away from single-occupant vehicles towards public transport and active modes. The proposal incorporates a range of public transport options, including shuttle services, off-line public transport (gondolas and Funifor), and is designed with the flexibility to integrate with future transport services and infrastructure as they are developed. These sustainable transport choices would supplement existing regional council-subsidised services and other commercial operators.

Objectively, the site presents a notable opportunity to implement best-practice principles in sustainable urban transport. Its proximity to the town centre, combined with the planned infrastructure for walking, cycling, and public transport, enables a higher proportion of trips to be made by non-car modes compared to more peripheral developments that have occurred, and continue to be planned, in the District. Furthermore, the site's development over a long timeframe allows for ongoing adaptation to emerging transport technologies and evolving community needs, supporting a resilient and future-ready transport network.

Finally, the amended proposal shows that future provision for carparking may overlap the QLDC Arterials stage 3 designation footprint, but I consider this can be managed in close collaboration between Bowen Peak Limited and Council to not compromise the delivery of the Stage 3 Arterial and

supporting works. A flexible approach is proposed, allowing for development prior to the construction of the Arterial and subsequent modification of the site as needed once the Arterial is under construction and operational. I elaborate on this further later in this letter.

Residential Development Component

The residential component is Fernhill Heights, which features chalet-style living. I have considered the 2D and 3D renders of vehicle and pedestrian bridges through Fernhill Heights, refer Figure 2 (roads in red, pedestrian bridges in blue). I understand that the proposed roads have a grade of no more than 1:8, and corners can be designed of a suitable gradient to enable public buses, coaches and other rigid heavy vehicles to access the chalets.

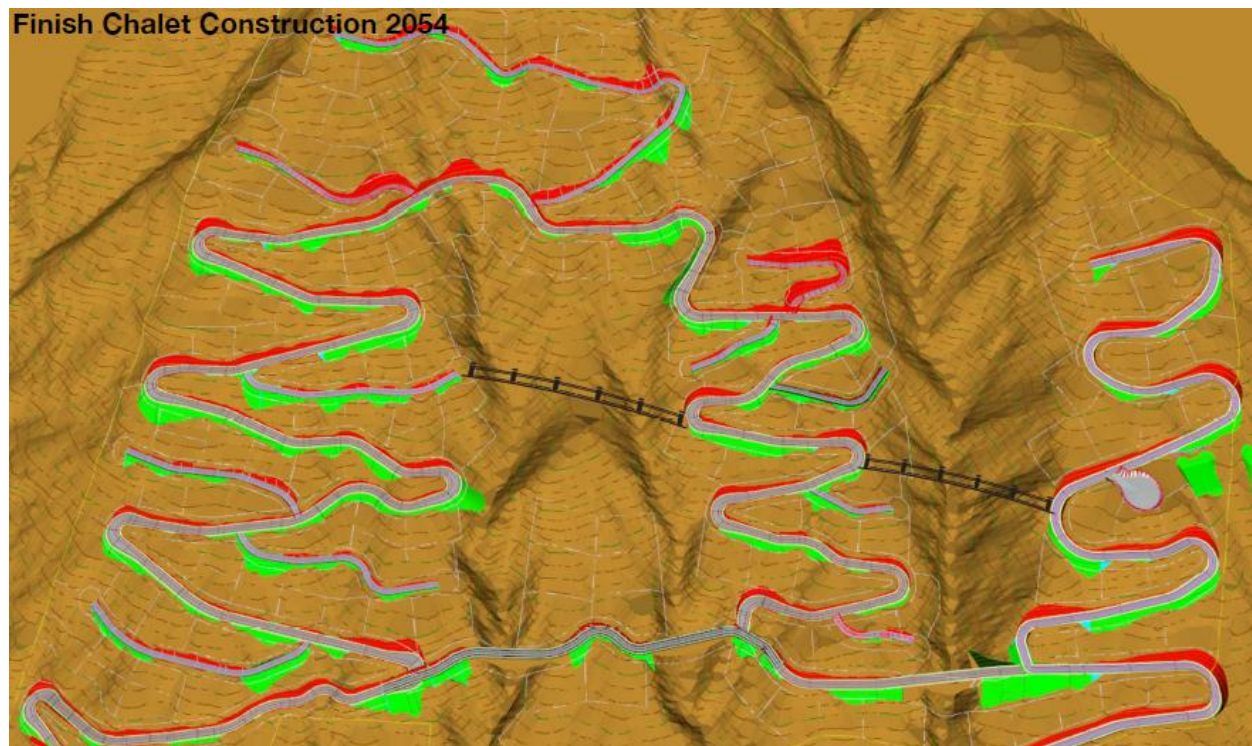


Figure 2 Fernhill Heights proposed roading layout with indicative footbridges to connect to gondola station

Halfway up the eastern side of the site is the “Fernhill Heights station” connecting the Powerhouse Gondola to the Saddle Funifor, providing direct access both to the town centre and to the recreational activities. I have reviewed the concept graphic prepared for this space as shown in Figure 3 overleaf. I understand that in addition to the station connecting to the gondola and Funifor, this space will include bus/coach stop with turnaround area, a multi-storey car park, and the entrance to the predator-free sanctuary. This public space will serve as a communal area for the surrounding residential chalets and perform an important ‘transport hub’ function.

The multi-storey carpark at the station allows for a ‘park-and-ride’ activity for residents or other visitors. The capacity and use of this car park will have to be carefully managed to avoid attracting large amounts of traffic to Fernhill Heights. This would require continuous monitoring and management, and I recommend that a staff and visitor travel plan be developed as part of any future substantial application.



Figure 3 Fernhill Heights Station Concept

There are also other options to provide sustainable access to Fernhill Heights as it develops including extending the coverage of the current public transport network and the use of private shuttle services (which I understand from Bowen Peak Limited will serve the base gondola station) to provide further choice for residents on the central and western ridges.

One Mile Powerhouse Reserve Component

The Powerhouse Precinct encompasses many of the key activities within the development and serves as the primary gateway to the ropeway system, providing access to both Fernhill Heights and the recreational areas within the reserve. The base gondola station is located a very short walk from the Fernhill roundabout and connects directly to walkways and mountain bike tracks that traverse the reserve.

There is a wide, primary pedestrian connection leading directly to the existing Powerhouse building, with further links to tracks that extend up to Thomson Street above this part of the reserve. A small retail building is also proposed adjacent to the gondola station; my understanding is that this facility is intended to be ancillary to the reserve and would not generate additional travel demand (i.e., it is not an attraction in isolation from the reserve such as a convenience store). In addition, a hospitality activity featuring a café and rooftop area is proposed, which is likewise intended to be ancillary to the reserve's activities.

Only very limited car parking is provided adjacent to the gondola station prior to the delivery of the Stage 3 Arterial, as the intention is that walk access, shuttle services and public transport are the primary means of access to the Powerhouse Precinct. This will require careful promotion and management, including a commitment to providing and integrating with other sustainable transport choices to avoid poor outcomes with respect to spill over parking and associated congestion. In my view, this approach is achievable in this context, and I have made several recommendations in this letter to support its successful implementation.

Ropeway Component

The ropeway component of the site is intended to act as both a public transport and tourist service, thereby serving several important transportation functions as follows:

- The Powerhouse Gondola serves as public transportation to access the Fernhill Heights residential development and the Te Taumata o Hakietekura Predator-free Sanctuary component. Given the convenient location of the base station to Lake Esplanade as well as provision of a high-frequency on-demand shuttle, the residents will be able to access the town centre and beyond without relying on private vehicle travel.
- The Powerhouse Gondola connects to the Saddle Funifor to provide access to the Ben Lomond Saddle for recreation and tourism, including to connect to the popular Ben Lomond Track.
- The Saddle Funifor connects to the Bowen Peak Gondola to further provide access for recreation and tourism opportunities, specifically to the mountain bike and ski area as well as the proposed Bowen Peak viewing platform.

The close proximity of the gondola station to the large hotels and other accommodation options along Lake Esplanade and being in the town centre means that the ropeway component of the development is easily accessible and visitors do not require a car to access the recreational activities. Queenstown Hill gondola aside, this is unique in the context of outdoor tourist offerings in the District. It is also possible to further support this sustainable approach by making it clear through promotional materials that there is only limited car parking available for the various activities.

I recommend that as part of the substantial application that a carpark and access strategy be developed to prioritise any available carparking for mobility parking, booked tours (eg coaches) and potentially limited paid parking. Both visitors and staff should be encouraged to use sustainable transport modes as a first choice. The provision of a private shuttle or bus from the town centre further supports this approach.

Wider Future Opportunities

The central location of the site provides future opportunities to integrate with other transport initiatives.

The emerging Whoosh® on-demand ride-hailing scheme³ is an example of a future transport option that may provide everyday transport choice for future Fernhill Heights residents over the coming 30 years. This scheme could be integrated with this proposal as it develops, and I understand Bowen Peak Limited are willing to explore this opportunity.

I understand a CBD to Airport Gondola is in the early stages of planning, providing a future offline transport solution as an alternative to private vehicle travel between the airport in Frankton and the Queenstown town centre. There is the potential for this to terminate at the Lakeview site in the vicinity of Thomson Street. The Powerhouse Gondola is well placed to be the first stage of a well-connected future network of offline public transport, with a relatively short connection between Lakeview and the Powerhouse Gondola base station providing this connectivity as the network grows. This link is shown indicatively on the concept sketches (see Figure 4). This would substantially extend the reach and attractiveness of non-car-based travel for Fernhill Heights residents and visitors to the reserve.

Until such time as additional offline public transport services become available, I recommend that private shuttles or buses, in addition to existing public transport services, be engaged as an interim measure to provide connectivity to the town centre. These could be high frequency regular services and/or on-demand from well publicised pick-up points in the town centre. This approach would help ensure that sustainable and flexible transport options are available as the site develops and as broader transport initiatives are implemented.

³ <https://www.whoosh.solutions/>

Specific consideration of concerns relating to Stage 3 Arterial

I note that the Powerhouse Precinct Concept Sketch (no bypass version) shows an at-grade carpark within the designation boundary for QLDC’s Stage 3 Town Centre Arterial, as shown on the left side of Figure 4. I do not support this aspect of the proposal being retained in perpetuity as it has the potential to impact on the future Stage 3 road construction and operation.

I strongly recommend that an agreement be reached with QLDC regarding the temporary use of this site until such time as the Stage 3 Arterial construction period begins. For this reason, the carpark should be annotated as temporary subject to a formal agreement with QLDC to disestablish the car park should Council require the land. I consider that the carpark could then be relocated to the future conference centre site. I further note that the future multi-story carpark is not part of this application, nor is the conference centre – so this would be an intuitive location to provide alternative carparking. This is a matter which I will work through closely with Bowen Peak Limited going forwards.

The timing of the construction and operation of the Stage 3 arterial remains uncertain but is likely to be some years distant. My recommended temporary approach (including a formal agreement with QLDC to be established through the substantive application process) is in my view a suitable mechanism to ensure the Stage 3 Arterial is not compromised. This recognises that the full designation footprint may be required for construction activities, and post-construction for services, landscaping and/or stormwater treatment.

The Powerhouse Precinct Concept Sketch (with bypass version on right of Figure 4) shows an integrated approach to the delivery of transport infrastructure with a bus stop and potential future roading connection to a multi-story building. Pedestrian and cycle access is supported with underpasses indicatively shown in the plan. I am unsure whether this can be practically achievable due to the terrain however I consider that both grade-separated (such as an underpass) and at grade options can be designed to safely integrate with the site. I also consider there are options to adjust the future multi-story building footprint to avoid the designation but note this is not part of this application.

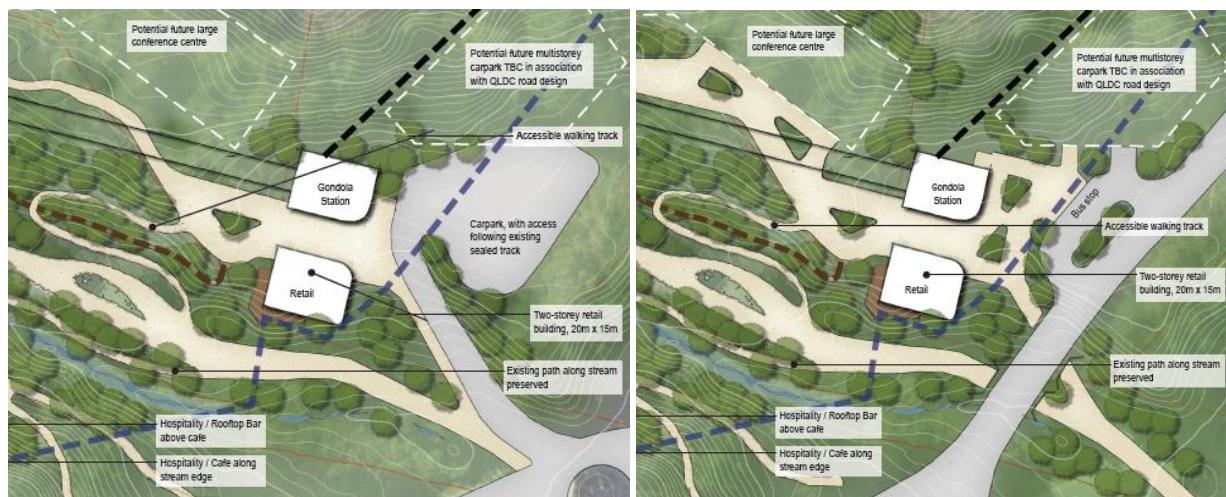


Figure 4 Excerpts of Powerhouse Precinct (pre-Arterial on left and post-Arterial on right)

The post-Stage 3 Arterial scenario is looking well into the future. The QLDC website⁴ states early design and land acquisition is anticipated to progress from 2029-30. I anticipate Stage 2 would be delivered prior to Stage 3 although the specific timing is uncertain. The planning and delivery of the Powerhouse Precinct infrastructure will require a close and collaborative working relationship with QLDC. The outcome shown on the concept sketch is one I fully support, allows for flexibility to work with closely with QLDC and will support multi-modal access to the Powerhouse Precinct.

⁴ <https://www.qldc.govt.nz/your-council/council-projects/queenstown-town-centre-arterial/>

I recommend that a Network Integration Management Plan (NIMP) be developed and conditioned as part of the substantive application to manage the delivery of the development and infrastructure alongside the delivery of the Stage 3 Arterial and other key projects. I have experience in developing NIMP principles and conditions, and consider that this would be a suitable mechanism to manage transport outcomes by assisting with the staging and timing of works.

Future Assessment and Traffic Modelling Approach

Should the proposal successfully move forward to the substantive application stage I recommend that an Integrated Transportation Assessment (ITA) report be prepared based on NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi ITA guidance and include:

- a detailed description of the current and future receiving environments
- a description of the transport elements of the proposal including how multi-modal access, parking (including mobility and cycle parking), servicing (including rubbish collection) of the site and connectivity through the site will operate.
- the delivery of a trip generation assessment and multi-modal modelling to inform the assessment of effects – a matter I elaborate on further below.
- an assessment of the standard of the roads and suitability of other transport infrastructure including against the Queenstown-Lakes District Council Engineering Code of Practice.
- an assessment of the proposal against transport-related policies and objectives.
- the preparation of an effective staff and visitor travel plan to provide a framework supporting sustainable travel choices and delivering an integrated transportation approach.
- a clear demonstration of connectivity between the site and existing transport infrastructure including in a pre and post Arterial Stage 3 environment, founded on a collaborative approach with QLDC, and a willingness to integrate with other transport providers such as the CBD to Airport gondola and Whoosh®.
- preparation of requirements and principles for a future Construction Traffic Management Plan.

One of the key components to the preparation of a future ITA will be the scoping and delivery of multi-modal transportation modelling to:

- forecast the anticipated level of uptake for each transport mode and understand impacts on the local and wider transport network.
- understand the extent to which private vehicular traffic associated with the development can be limited and suitably managed including consideration of parking.
- ensure integration with existing and future transportation infrastructure is well planned and understood including in a post-Stage 3 arterial environment.
- identifying any mitigation that may be required to address an increase in traffic levels and provide a suitable level of provision for buses, shuttles, pedestrians and cyclists alike.
- consider opportunities to extend the current public bus service, as well as to integrate with future transport initiatives including the future CBD to Airport gondola, Whoosh® scheme and other future offline modes of public transport.

I propose that the current suite of modelling tools available in the District, specifically the Tracks strategic model, bespoke WSP public transport model and Queenstown-Frankton Paramics model, would all have a role in this assessment.

Summary of My Assessment

My assessment indicates that the development can be supported from a transport perspective, subject to the considerations and recommendations outlined in this letter. The site's location, together with the proposed mix of sustainable transport options - including walking, cycling, public transport, and the ropeway system - provides a strong foundation for integrated and resilient transport outcomes.

There is flexibility within the proposal to achieve an integrated approach between the development and available and future anticipated transport infrastructure.

However, I do not support the retention of the at-grade carpark within the designation boundary for QLDC's Stage 3 Town Centre Arterial as a permanent feature, due to the potential impact on future road construction and operation. I strongly recommend that any use of this area for carparking be clearly identified as temporary and subject to a formal agreement with QLDC, with provision for relocation if required. Additionally, careful management of carpark capacity and use at the ropeway station will be necessary to avoid attracting excessive traffic to the development.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any additional information in relation to my assessment including the recommendations put forward in this letter.

Regards,

Abley Limited



Dave Smith

Technical Director, Transportation Planning

D s 9(2)(a)

M s 9(2)(a)

E s 9(2)(a)