

Before an Expert Consenting Panel

Under the Fast Track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA)

And

In the matter of An application for approvals by Mt Iron Junction Limited (**MIJL**) to develop approximately 263 high-density residential dwellings, a childcare centre, a retail building, a restaurant, a service station, and parks at 237 Wānaka to Luggate Highway, Wānaka ('Mt Iron Junction Housing Scheme').

Statement of Planning Evidence of Christopher John Baker for the New Zealand Transport Agency

Dated 25 August 2026

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This brief is provided by Chris Baker on behalf of New Zealand Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA) for the Mt Iron Junction Ltd application under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (FTAA).

1.2 This statement relates to transport planning matters arising from the Application, particularly concerning transport infrastructure requirements.

2 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

2.1 My full name is Christopher John Baker.

2.2 I am a Principal Transport Planner in Planning, Performance and Safety, System Design, where my purpose is to provide technical transport planning advice on regional and nationally significant transport matters. My focus areas include Otago/Southland and the wider South Island, with particular emphasis on strategic transport planning, transport assessment of land use development proposals, and integration of transport, safety and planning outcomes at the NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA).

2.3 I hold a Bachelor of Engineering in Civil with first class honours from the University of Auckland. I am a Professional Development Scheme mentor with the Transport Planning Society, currently working towards the Transport Planning Professional qualification recently rolled out in New Zealand.

2.4 I joined NZTA in 2021 as a Senior Investment Advisor in the Local Government Partnerships team. I moved into the Transport Planning team as a Principal Transport Planner in 2024 and am primarily responsible for transport planning in the Queenstown Lakes District.

2.5 During my time at NZTA I have provided transport planning advice on strategic network planning, business case development, transport modelling, land use change and development proposals affecting the state highway network. This has included lead or substantial input into the Queenstown Strategic Network Plan, the Queenstown Lakes District transport modelling suite, structure planning and fast-track development proposals in the Queenstown Lakes District and assessment of development effects on the state highway network including capacity, safety, active transport connections, staging, infrastructure requirements, designation and land requirements and funding or delivery mechanisms. I regularly work with NZTA safety, network, legal, investment and environmental planning specialists, as well as local government partners and external consultants, to ensure transport effects are appropriately understood and that mitigation is appropriate.

3 CODE OF CONDUCT

3.1 I have read the Environment Court Practice Note 2023 – Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses (Code) and have complied with the Code in the preparation of this statement. I agree to follow the Code of Conduct. I confirm that the opinions I express are within my area of expertise and are my own, except where I state that I am relying on the work or evidence of others, which I have specified. I have not omitted to consider any material facts known to me that might alter or detract from the opinions which I express below.

4 SCOPE OF EVIDENCE

- 4.1 This evidence responds to the transport matters identified by the Panel in Minute 6, paragraph 3(a) to (c), relating to the effects of the Application on operation and capacity at the SH6/SH84/Riverbank Road roundabout. I also address, at a transport planning level, active mode connection matters previously raised by the Panel in Minute 5, paragraph 3(a)(iv), and the subsequent discussions about shared use path connections referred to in Minute 7.
- 4.2 In preparing this evidence I have considered the Application material, the transportation assessment prepared for the Applicant, the Applicant's response to the Panel's information requests, NZTA's previous comments and memoranda to the Panel, and technical advice obtained by NZTA in relation to the potential future upgrade of the roundabout and active mode connections. My evidence is limited to transport planning matters and should be read alongside other evidence provided on behalf of NZTA.

5. EFFECTS ON ROUNDABOUT OPERATION AND CAPACITY

- 5.1 The existing roundabout currently operates with relatively low delays, but future capacity is limited, particularly on the SH84 west approach in the evening peak. The Applicant's modelling indicates that, under observed traffic growth assumptions, the SH84 approach could substantially exceed capacity in the design year of 2035, with long queues and delays.
- 5.2 The Application would add traffic directly to the roundabout, with all trips generated by the development required to pass through the intersection. The additional traffic would consume available capacity and is likely to bring forward the timing of improvements needed to maintain acceptable operational performance.
- 5.3 Wider growth across Wānaka, Albert Town, Hāwea, Luggate and other parts of the Upper Clutha will also contribute to future pressure on the intersection. However, that broader context does not alter the need to identify and address the effects attributable to this Application.

6. ATTRIBUTION OF TRAFFIC EFFECTS

- 6.1 In my opinion, the Application should be assessed on its own merits, on the basis of the traffic it would generate and the effects that traffic would have on the roundabout in question. While further growth elsewhere in Wānaka and the Upper Clutha is anticipated, that growth is not part of this Application and its location, timing and form remain uncertain. I do not consider it would be appropriate to rely on hypothetical future development in other locations as a basis for assessing the mitigation required to address the effects of this Application.
- 6.2 The Application has a direct and attributable relationship with roundabout performance. All traffic generated by the development would enter or leave the site through the roundabout. The fact that other growth may occur elsewhere over time does not alter the need to assess the additional demand created by this proposal at this intersection.

6.3 For that reason, any comparison with an equivalent amount of growth elsewhere should be treated cautiously. In my opinion, the purpose of such a comparison is to assist in understanding attribution and impact. It should not be used to discount the Application's effects or to determine whether mitigation is required for the effects generated by the Application.

6.4 In practical terms, mitigation should respond to the effects generated by the Application, rather than relying on uncertainty about where equivalent growth might otherwise occur. If the Application adds materially to the operational pressure on the roundabout, appropriate mitigation may include delivering or funding the necessary upgrade, staging the development so that later stages do not proceed until sufficient capacity is available, or securing the land needed for the future upgrade.

7. **PROTECTION FOR A FUTURE DUAL-LANE ROUNDABOUT**

7.1 NZTA's current expectation is that the appropriate form of future capacity improvement is likely to be a partial or full second circulating lane at the existing roundabout. A signalised intersection has been considered at a high level, but the five-arm nature of the intersection and the high proportion of turning movements mean that signals are unlikely to provide a more efficient or preferable long-term solution than an upgraded roundabout.

7.2 In my opinion, the future roundabout upgrade should be protected by conditions that prevent development from encroaching on the upgrade footprint. Ideally, the land required for the partial or full second circulating lane, associated merge and diverge lanes, any required active mode facilities, lighting, drainage and stormwater treatment should be vested in NZTA or otherwise secured in a form that provides the same certainty. If that land is not secured now, there is a risk that the development proceeds in a way that makes the future roundabout upgrade materially more difficult, more expensive or impracticable. A financial contribution alone would not provide the same certainty, as there is no assurance as to whether or when NZTA would be in a position to fund and deliver the upgrade, and any contribution will reduce in real terms over time as construction costs increase.

8. **LAND VESTING FOR THE FUTURE UPGRADE**

8.1 Where the land required for the future roundabout upgrade is within the Application site or otherwise affected by the proposed subdivision layout, it should be identified with sufficient precision and secured before development proceeds. In my opinion, that is necessary to ensure the Application does not compromise NZTA's ability to deliver the future state highway improvement when required.

9. **ACTIVE MODE CONNECTIONS**

9.1 The Panel has also raised questions about shared use path connections to and from the Application site. The Application includes residential and non-residential activities that will generate walking and cycling demand, both from residents of the development and from people accessing services within the site.

9.2 From a transport planning perspective, the key issue is whether safe and direct active mode connections are provided between the site and the wider Wānaka network. NZTA has previously supported connections that link the site to existing

and planned shared path infrastructure, including connections towards SH84 and SH6, while recognising that the detailed alignment, design standard and delivery mechanism are matters to be resolved through conditions, engineering approval and, where works are within the state highway corridor, appropriate agreement with NZTA.

- 9.3 I do not consider it necessary or appropriate in this evidence to address the detailed design of those paths, which will be covered in evidence provided by others. However, I consider that consent conditions should ensure that the Application provides safe walking and cycling connections from the site to the surrounding network.
- 9.4 In particular, this should include a new sealed, all-weather connection towards the existing SH84 underpass near Three Parks, and a connection from the north along the western side of SH6 into the site. In my opinion, the SH6 connection does not necessarily need to extend beyond Aubrey Road or along Aubrey Road itself, but it should provide a direct and safe connection into the Application site where it does not currently exist for people travelling from the north along the highway corridor. Without these connections, there is a risk of people using informal and unsafe routes alongside the state highway.
10. **CONCLUSION**
- 10.1 In summary, the Application would have a tangible effect on the operation of the SH6/SH84/Riverbank Road/Junction Road roundabout and would contribute to bringing forward the need for future capacity improvements at the intersection. While wider growth will also contribute to that pressure over time, the Application should be assessed on its own merits and the effects attributable to it appropriately addressed.
- 10.2 I also consider it important that the Application provides appropriate walking and cycling connections to the wider active mode network. In particular, safe and direct connections should be provided between the site and the existing and planned active mode routes along SH6 and SH84.
- 10.3 In my opinion, the Applicant should deliver or fund the transport improvements needed to address the Application's contribution to future roundabout capacity constraints, or at minimum provide the land required for the upgrade. The Applicant should also provide the active mode connections described above. If those improvements are not delivered before the relevant stages of development, staging conditions should be used to ensure that development does not proceed beyond the point at which the roundabout can operate acceptably.

DATED the 25th day of August 2026

Chris Baker

Principal Transport Planner, NZTA