



SUBMISSION ON QUEENSTOWN AIRPORT CORPORATION 30 YEAR MASTER PLAN

To: Queenstown Airport Corporation
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Name of submitter: **Queenstown Chamber of Commerce**

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This is a submission on the 30 Year Master Plan, Queenstown Airport Corporation.

The Queenstown Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission on the Queenstown Airport Corporation's (QAC) 30 Year Master Plan.

The Chamber communicates with local and central government to achieve effective outcomes for its members. Its' key services include the provision of current and relevant information to the membership, advocacy on behalf of the members, recognising and rewarding achievement and generally contributing to the vibrancy of the business community.

The Chamber is motivated by the best long-term outcomes for the business community and is an independent voice with no vested interest. Therefore, the Chamber is pleased to be able to present this submission on behalf of the 630 Queenstown businesses it represents and would like to make the following comments:

Queenstown Airport Corporation 30 Year Master Plan

The Chamber is pleased to be able to provide this feedback on the 30 Year Master Plan based on 30 one-on-one interviews with members. The 30 interviews were carried out over 50 hours covering a range of businesses varying in size from small to large and sectors including: Corporate, Hospitality, Accommodation and Retail/General

The interviews took the form of structured questions to begin with. By the end of the interviews, interviewees expanded on their initial feedback – see under *infrastructure/planning* towards at the end of the document.

During the interviews other areas of interest to the Chamber were discussed, including a Visitor Levy and Labour Force issues, in addition to the Master Plan. While the majority of comments below relate directly to the Master Plan, a number of other associated issues were raised and are included at the bottom of this submission under *General/Other*.

The comments reported below from the individual interviews are not exhaustive but reflect a broad cross section of the feedback and endeavor to give QAC Board, Executive and Stakeholders a ‘feel’ for the information gained.

For the most part the Chamber interviewed members who had already shown an interest in the Master Plan by attending information sessions held by QAC.

Are you aware of QAC's recently released 30 Year Master Plan? Did you make a submission? If not, why not? If yes, what was the basis of your feedback?

- Of 30 respondents 25 were aware of the masterplan with 5 having little or no awareness. The majority of the businesses interviewed had attended an information session on the 30 year plan.
- Of the 30 businesses, none had provided either written formal submissions or online feedback. Two only had provided informal feedback to the CEO of the QAC.
- The reasons given for having not provided either formal or informal feedback was primarily due to lack of time.

Regarding the current modelling of 5 million passenger movements by ... What are your initial thoughts about this?

There was a range of views around this question and what the implications of 5M passenger movements actually means – e.g. are all these people going into the town centre and how many use the airport as a hub and drive directly out of Queenstown?

However the majority of the feedback, as reflected below, was that while there are relatively few issues with the projected numbers per se, there is wide concern related to the associated infrastructure requirements – i.e. hotel rooms, roading and transport in particular.

Supportive and/ or conditional

- Airport big economic driver for QTN but the numbers are frightening! Whilst supportive of increase in flights rest of infrastructure needs to be invested in at same level to quote with. It should not proceed with their plan without rest of infrastructure being planned for. Need to remember airport - our biggest strategic asset & community asset. Community need to be part of planning & decision making.
- Creates traffic issues. Need enough hotel beds but not against the actual numbers

- Possibly 5m but certain we can't cope with \$7m passenger movements. Need Wanaka to take pressure off when at limit or use other airports. But larger aircraft will reduce number of flights
- Yes, support but obviously capacity issues, could argue they (QAC) could grow, regardless of challenges but need to plan for the future.
- No issues with expanding the airport. Concerns about rest of infrastructure - not unique to QTN. More of an issue is worker housing
- Yes to 5m passenger movements because reflecting what we should expect, including local district growth.
- Sustainable if done properly i.e. ancillary infrastructure e.g. accommodation, if more hotels at airport takes pressure of town but roading important.
- Great business opportunity - stimulate economic growth, will need hotel rooms and current infrastructure would be under pressure.
- At 5m passenger movements - would be able to cope from business growth side, love it that they have these targets.
- Excited by growth & happy with short haul flights from eastern border. Employ 700pax for 1m passengers - what would economic growth look like at 2m pax.
- Bloody good for business. Exciting - should support 5m pax. A lot of other infrastructure needs to be addressed first, what Frankton looks like, parking etc. Don't know what advancements will be in technology but will probably affect ability to cope.
- Great for the community as far as growth is concerned. But how are going to service these numbers e.g. who's cleaning the rooms, where are the rooms? Had to stop taking bookings this last summer - couldn't service the rooms.
- Growth modelled achievable given recent growth not unrealistic. Pro-growth generally.
- Just been through Tokyo - QTN not bad currently as long as they do what they do now better, it is achievable. But luggage slow. Would need bypass improvements on Frankton Road transport improvements with bus system – this was a good move.
- Can town accommodate it? But if they can having 5m – great. What about accommodation, infrastructure, roads etc. Developers and airport itself should pay some of roading etc. where required.

Not Supportive

- From personal point of view - not sustainable in Queenstown. Queenstown losing its mystic, small, intimate feel. Already busy and not intimate any longer. From business point of view, could be detrimental, counterproductive because visitor & local experience degraded.
- Awful - needs well thought out plan for district. Wanaka makes sense given constraints
- At 5m - do I want to live in Queenstown? (Jacks Point). How can town manage those levels of growth - town, transport etc.?
- Sensitive to lack of space at the current terminal. But what about roads, transport, where will they stay - how do we get out of gridlock? Rental cars concerning - need to hub cars outside of CBD and make it easy to access to public buses.

What is your preferred option for a terminal building – expand the current terminal or option 2 or option 3?

The majority of interviewees had no particular preference due to lack of knowledge about the various options. Some comments below:

- With the development of Five mile and infrastructure to the Frankton/Remarkable's Park area, growing the terminals as per Plan 2 and 3 would make the airport more of a community hub and central point, more so than a traditional airport facility. At present the airport sits fairly separately to anything else, and a good focus for the future should be to increase foot traffic around this area, and increase the duration of time people spend at the airport prior/post departure to increase airport revenue. Being the only accessible gateway to Queenstown, it is currently quite unique and has huge potential and undoubtedly growth in the upcoming years. Growing this in an area that is inclusive of other large scale commercial operations, with care and consideration for parking, green spaces, hire car facilities and public transport is a key focus in a small but growing tourist driven town.
Option 2: Ease and practicality of location of terminal and parking. - Terminal proximity to Remarkable's Park
Option 3: Terminal has a better outlook, so in terms of airport "desirability" and marketing for the Queenstown area, aesthetically this should be taken into consideration. - Proximity to the Queenstown Central development and new infrastructure
Where the current terminal sits, this key space could include community buildings such as corporate/privately operated "events center", large community park funded by QLDC, large "hanger-like" market place buildings to compliment the airport.
- Current Terminal, proceed with caution with 5 m, 7m not tolerable.
- B- Build south of runway - improved connectivity - keep all the general aviation
- Option 2 north facing, more room for expansion. 17 hectares could be 37 hectares.
- Developing Wanaka makes sense but why not airport at Cromwell? But great as a local to have convenience of the airport - have to be thankful for the location.

With increased arrivals and increased flights, you could realistically expect an overall increase in noise levels at certain times of the day at peak periods. Do you have any thoughts about this?

At a general level, there appeared to be little concern about increases in flight movements and the subsequent increases in noise as a result of. There were some objections where the business owner resided in the direct vicinity of airport i.e. Frankton Flats, Kelvin Heights, Lake Hayes Estate and to a lesser degree Jacks Point and Lakeview Estate. Noise around business activity during the day was not an issue with people expecting their work day to be 'noisy'.

Supportive and/or conditional

- Do become accustomed to noise, could move back to Auckland - not much different to Queenstown currently. More people = more opportunities, but need to have premium offering. Not sure where tipping point might be.

- Live near airport (aircraft considerably quieter) doesn't impact in daylight hours put up a lot of noise in normal working day. People built cheaper houses in QAC area.
- Just have to wait until planes pass over
- Tourism town - have to accept. Hypocritical to complain when you are flying to Auckland. But needs sensible mitigation
- Not one complaint ever about noise. Drones an issue - dangerous over lake in flight path. Cost to progress - if we want growth, need to understand the costs associated e.g. construction downtown
- Difficult for people in Kelvin Heights but planes are getting quieter, noise will go down. Helicopters could be relocated in 10 years. Fixed wing shouldn't be here – dangerous.
- 5 stops every Saturday playing 1 tennis game! From business sense - not big inconvenience in scheme of things - benefits outweigh disadvantages.
- Does not affect business – interruption low compared to Washington USA where there is a flight movement every 60 seconds.
- Personally not affected. Assumption that more people, more planes but could have bigger planes. Should be reducing the number of small planes - need bigger planes and premium to be paid by corporate jets. Funds should go to noise mitigation
- Kelvin Heights - in summer hear noise but only 10 seconds - landings don't affect. Smaller planes are worse.
- Frankton - not affected by flights currently but increased flights may have an effect. Never had one comment from guests, 1300 guest nights a month.
- Shotover Country- as resident does not bother me - notice early morning flight but during day doesn't bother me at all.
- Arrowtown & Dalefield - ultimately think we can cope with twice as many flights? This is a tourist town, have to expect a tourist town is going to grow.
- Bigger planes in future.
- Arrowtown - only hear 7am - Auckland flight. Hear more GA noise than anything.
- Quail Rise - hear 7am flight but don't notice others. But can imagine could be difficult for those near Frankton.
- Frankton - not affected currently but increased flights may have an effect. Never had one comment from guests, 1300 guest nights a month.
- Arthurs Point (used to live in Frankton) - can hear planes at night. Noise didn't bother me - part and parcel of living in QTN. The more planes the less you notice it as long as houses have noise insulation. People make a choice to live near an airport.
- Where the limits of noise relative to lifestyle are - don't know.
- Noise - there will be developments - may not be as big a problem as people perceive. Don't hear jets in town.
- Arrowtown - not affected personally or business location - more planes = more business.
- More business not necessarily better but overall can't stop - growth fine but needs to be managed. Noise relative to individual benchmarks - how long you have lived here and also what benchmark is in future. Expensive houses now being built at Kelvin Heights - they are aware of noise already. Houses more airtight and acoustically improvement & airplanes more quiet.
- It is not a big disruption to everyday life. Airport is life line for business, pleased it's there. Some retired people in K.H don't have anything else to do than complain. Have lived near Heathrow – live somewhere else if it doesn't suit. Can't overstate advantages of proximity. Auckland now only 22 mins from downtown city don't want to put international travelers on a bus for another hour (from Wanaka).

- More business - a necessary evil. People who buy near airport & complain - silly no airport ever becomes quieter. Corporate business groups would not fly into Wanaka. Small NZ groups only would go to Wanaka.
- Don't look at negatives- can't complain about noise. Look how to make an attractive link from airport to town. Need to look at innovative, cool and spectacular - everything should be like this in Queenstown.
- Noise at weekends (live @ Kelvin Heights) windows open have to pause T.V. Will affect our lifestyle - want to retire. Depends on where your benchmark is. Generally lifestyle degraded, similarly traffic/roads/peninsula/Kawarau Rd. But can easily access quiet areas - still live in wonderful little pocket in Kelvin Heights. Perhaps people need to stay out of town & just visit to do activities.
- Could be effected in Frankton Flats but people know they are going to live near airport. Acoustics very complex, helicopters worse and moving it could be facilitated by golf. Get creative about transport. Could make airport a destination in itself, people visit to see.
- As long QAC abides by noise limits between 6am and 10pm then it is acceptable. If you live in Frankton Flats you knew that airport located there

Not Supportive

- Kelvin Heights noise already unbearable at certain times, end of day & weekends. Infrastructure requirements more important than noise as it stands now but at 5m-7m what will the noise be like?
- Painful if you live in immediate environment. Have some sympathy for young families' etc. near the airport.
- More numbers = more frustration, town currently at risk - losing romance and mystic

Neutral

- Could be a tipping point for some Frankton residents but not affected currently. Part of modern life.
- It is pretty much background noise. Could but still can't see it impacting me personally, possibly if at home all day, but don't think so. Understand there will be noise at a place like Shotover country.
- Office overlooks airport - think it's quite exciting to look over that activity. Can't imagine personal lifestyle being compromised by commercial interests.
- Make a life decision to live near an airport or otherwise. But conscious of wider impact on broader Queenstown (but currently can't hear anything on Queenstown beach)
- There could be a time when personal life compromised but don't know when
- Probably a tipping point for some locals who live in flight paths. Big impact for some and negligible for others
- Yes, could be a time when noise outweighs advantages but more noise from small Milford planes.
- Ultimately personal lifestyles could be compromised but have chosen to live here.
- Current location very convenient, but as it expands, has to neutralise its immediate environment e.g. Old Frankton, Kelvin Heights, Lake Hayes already convenient. QAC - commercial operation - ok but a commercial player dictating how a town is going to be?
- Don't know what tripling flights means re noise but know what tripling of people means to infrastructure.

What opportunities do you see presented by this Master Plan?

There was concern that Queenstown has been playing catch up for 20 years or more and the associated infrastructure planning needs to be coordinated with integrated district wide planning.

- Integrated planning for the district - housing, downtown plans may not pass. Should force people to use ferries, gondolas.
- Need to work backwards - infrastructure - accommodation and then airport - not driven by the airports and airlines.
- Queenstown still doesn't have a vision for itself. What do we want it to look like? Can't be all things to all people. We need to make some hard decisions.
- What is the plan for Queenstown (Vision) Can manage growth (but not stop)
- Lack of masterplan/planning for rest of district has impacted negatively on the community Airport accessibility part of setting up business. Will be issues around roading etc. QLDC need to be aware of that. But inevitable town is going.
- Airport planning needs to be done in conjunction with other planning.
- Lack of planning for district - parking issues already with buses increasing lack of amenity in Queenstown.
- Admire QAC for doing plan, biggest concern pushing for quality vs quantity Less than 1m people paying the bills e.g. Aspen - you pay more you get more. Have less backpackers – they usually only come once contrary to opinion that they return with families later in life.

Do you have any thoughts about current or future planning for Queenstown Lakes District?

When asked to freely comment on any issues, a number of interviewees qualified or expanded on earlier remarks; There were a number of comments about “who is driving the agenda?”, “how will we manage growth” and “who will pay”?

- Planning governed by 3 year cycle long term planning remiss. QAC highly commended but what is QLDC doing -how does council work with this? District Plan a debacle – need vision for the town
- 40 years growing now and can't catch up. Airport and airlines don't drive agenda for Queenstown. Look at AKL 2016-2017 – had new airlines come in = more people = gridlock. Have not caught up. And we never catch up either – so more people concerning.
- Destination Management - how much growth is realistic? Shouldn't all be about growth but how do we curtail growth?
- QLDC needs spatial plan - at least 30 years, use best consultants
- Tourism experience is the ultimate - makes premium resort. Prices up more like Aspen. Constrained geographically. Not quaint village anymore. Downtown working now but what will it look like?
- Can do \$7m pax if they buy more of Remarkable's Park land. No need to develop Wanaka – same issues with planes flying over town. Airlines will not want to replicate infrastructure, crews etc. - only 100 km's away.
- How do we fund it? - Need to bite the bullet - water, essential infrastructure.
- Issue is with location of airport. What does the community look like in 30 years? Where are the hotels & rest of infrastructure? Not many places where airport in middle of town. The 30 year plan - good but not integrated with other plans or lack of plans.

- Planes will be quieter more efficient as time goes on but these projections based on best case - previously SARS, Japanese Emperor, carless days, Chile volcano etc. Also China could turn off international travel at any time e.g. reduce to 3 hours international maximum.
- Good Planning for infrastructure ahead of the curve important (we have been behind the ball) this will enable a better visitor experience & from business point of view shows ability to be based out of Queenstown - enable more economic activity.
- Want to see more development in urban/already built up areas. More hotels but not competitive ones.
- Have been playing catch up for some time, people struggle to get heads around this sort of growth but ultimately supply will match demand.
- District is going to be struggling for next two decades to keep up. Changing zoning i.e. intensive for worker accommodation and pay more.
- Need collaboration between all major entities & respective plans.
- Flights going to be limited anyway by other infrastructure needs, hotels. Not sure of repercussions of being hub airport.
- Overall concern with the huge numbers of visitors coming through airport, that these numbers displace people living here. We want to help the town and Air B&B compromising availability of rentals etc.

Wanaka Airport

Most respondents did not have a view of where Wanaka might fit into future planning. Some comments below:

- The incorporation of Wanaka airport is a great idea to disperse movements, and add to the economic benefits of the wider region. Movement of certain routes to the Wanaka airport could free Queenstown airport to cope with more GA and private jet movements which have seen a steady increase in recent years. Sustainability and “green” factor should be a centre focus for the development, Queenstown is seeing a lot of commercial growth, backed by significant capital but projects rarely have a 30year vision. For the town to remain desirable Queenstown needs to lead with cutting edge eco-friendly construction, focus on green space, landscaping, street-scaping, view-corridors from these buildings, overall ‘master’ planning for timeless construction and accessibility.
- Hindsight- should have had second airport at Five Rivers, Wanaka overtop of big town. Still issues with fog and mountains.
- Wanaka - could possibly become more exclusive e.g. Davos (need to central how we do things e.g. gateway control) Infrastructure required. Airport should be contributing to roading and transport in and around airport and should be transparent. Should relook at Five Rivers - issues with Wanaka development. Kingston less an issue than Kawarau Gorge or Crown Range.
- Need to spread the load e.g. private planes elsewhere or fly into Wanaka 9-5pm but need to take the pressure off Queenstown.
- Worse case is we build more than required but this is better than "underinvestment". Airport currently a sweet spot in terms of profitability but an underutilised facility better than not providing for the future. Investment in new terminal good either way - won't know for 10 -15 years. Wanaka should be considered but unlikely airlines will support. Airport and destination marketing working together on shoulder seasons - targeting new and different markets – this flattens demand.

- If can't build on Queenstown Hill, then Wanaka makes sense. Safest of two airports - does have merit - longer runways etc. But cost of building Wanaka prohibitive. Should reconsider other local options - or Cromwell?
- Spread the load to Wanaka - Having an airport in town is a luxury. Bigger planes but less of them. Dictate what infrastructure requirements are needed. But let's have a good idea of where we are going.

Other Comments:

- Proceed with caution. Enough potential to grow more but ironically most people already doing well.
- Need to talk about what sort of visitor we want - Queenstown should be aspirational.
- We double numbers, where are they coming from? What are key numbers for each market? Where is the new growth actually coming from? - Are QAC's numbers feasible! It is not just an infrastructure question. If e.g. increased Chinese numbers need a cultural change to adapt permanently where does QAC get its numbers from? One of current biggest markets is in decline (Chinese).
- Queenstown Visitor nights up 3%, Te Anau 18% - can't get a room or too expensive in Queenstown. Current system is not working and public turning against visitor economy.
- Transportation and affordable accommodation needs to be addressed. If it takes an hour to get to work, this will be a problem. How to get people from A-B the biggest issue, followed by other amenities and worker accommodation.
- Security shambles at airport - lack of seating space and much retail - Greedy. Not good passenger experience. Airlines must be worried.
- Airport already feels busy - discussion needed about roading. Appears to be 1900 additional hotel rooms currently or going through resource consent. 300-400 under construction. More demand than supply at present
- Strong about freedom camping - becoming a rundown resort.
- More People moving to Frankton because of other issues downtown - new set of problems.
- Between 1.2 - 2.5 million passengers - there will be a tolerance level. Only way to control growth is through airport – the new target will be 5M passenger movements no matter what it says. Don't want community to be hoodwinked or cornered into a growth commitment.
- Delivery of experience will become decreased but rate of growth is the biggest worry. Can't kill the goose that lays the golden egg. Tourism just pushes people & places - takes as much as it can.
- La Paz - Bolivia 71 gondolas - 60 cents a trip. Stay away from more roads and parking – should all be pedestrianised. Two camps - those that don't want change and others who do. Should be acceptance that we have slice of paradise and options: a) Shut it down for locals b) allow it to expand and everyone have opportunity to experience. Will always be limited by geography – therefore balanced by demand and supply e.g. cost of hotel rooms currently.
- Amway Thailand spend \$6m (1500 pax) no extra impact on roads and little impact in town - generates huge amounts of tax revenue. Need to have more high value (businesses) and tourists.