

Wood, Alastair

DOWNTOWN QT

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Other Comments

Would you like to comment on any other aspect of this draft 10 Year Plan?

See attached submission



**Submission by Downtown QT Incorporated
to the Queenstown Lakes District Council 10 Year Plan 2015**

1.0 TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

1.1 BACKGROUND

Downtown QT (DQT) is an Incorporated Society with a representative board taken from a cross section of people and businesses who operate out of the Queenstown Town Centre Zone. The organisation is an initiative of the Queenstown Chamber of Commerce who identified the need for a collective, pro-active and unified voice contributing to the future benefit of the town centre. Steve Wilde has been appointed as the full time manager for the group.

Downtown QT is funded from voluntarily levies paid by members of the Incorporated Society. The initial board is as follows:

Alastair Wood (Chairperson)	Colliers International
Mike Burgess	Watertight Investments
Beatrice Riso	Louis Vuitton
Kim Wilkinson	Unichem Wilkinsons Pharmacy
Kelvin Collins	Highland Real Estate Group
Johnny Stevenson	Westwood Group Holdings
Grant Hattaway	Hattaway Consultancy
Phil Wilson	AWS Legal
Ann Lockhart (co-opted)	Queenstown Chamber of Commerce
Graham Budd (co-opted)	Destination Queenstown

The commercial and intrinsic value of the Queenstown town centre to the wider area is enormous. It's estimated over \$1 billion in property is located within the CBD boundary and as such the area contributes substantially to the QLDC rating budget. The Queenstown CBD is also fundamental to the tourism experience for the majority of visitors to the district.

In recent decades there has been a significant disconnect with regard to planning and development of the Queenstown CBD. Development, planning and infrastructure has been largely reactive instead of following a long term strategic plan.

Downtown QT intends to develop a long term strategic plan, by facilitating pro-active ideas from all stakeholders and businesses in the CBD. It will take into account the views from all sectors including office, retail, tourism, hospitality, corporate and property owners. There is substantial local knowledge that can be utilised for the benefit of the town centre as well as providing the council with important feedback and advice, which can be

incorporated not only into the District Plan, but the Transport Strategy and various other QLDC initiatives.

1.2 PROPOSAL

It is requested that the QLDC provides funding to develop a Queenstown Town Centre Strategic Plan. The DQT board is proposing to engage specialist consultant Chris Wilkinson, from First Retail Group, to facilitate and complete this plan. In addition the Town Centre Manager, Steve Wilde, will co-ordinate with the various QLDC divisions to get their input. The intention is to develop a “living document” which can be updated annually.

First Retail Group Ltd are a leading consultancy specialising in retail, hospitality and tourism strategies. The company is acknowledged for its work in town centre resilience - helping councils and CBD stakeholder groups develop opportunity, drive performance and manage risk.

First Retail have developed much of the foundation insight, strategy and systems that informs the Downtown QT group and has built a considerable depth of knowledge in this specialist market.

In 2014 First Retail Group first commissioned a survey of the Town Centre occupiers on behalf of Downtown QT, this provided a basis on which the strategy plan could be developed.

The following points were canvased:

- **Commercial Curation:** What is the preferred business and retail mix and can precincts be developed?
- **Consistency and Assurance:** Develop ideal opening hours for retail businesses to provide the best experience for shoppers and tourists and leading to a better “late night” feel to town.
- **Local Connection and Engagement:** Establish ways of getting local “buy-in” and ownership of the town centre, making it easier for them to access the CBD.
- **Transport and Parking:** Align these with wider district issues and what works in other tourist towns in Australia and further afield.
- **Accessibility and Usability:** Develop better pedestrian flows around the CBD and, as the town expands, ensure these flows are managed into the future.
- **Look and Feel:** Establish a clear vision on streetscape and landscaping with planned expenditure tagged over the next ten years.
- **Security and Lighting:** Ensuring our downtown remains a safe and welcoming place.
- **Hospitality and Retail Alignment:** How can both sectors work together strategically to build commercial success, whilst meeting new markets and improving the visitor experience.
- **Hospitality – Mix and Offer:** What works and how can we provide a better experience.
- **Future Development:** How do we want the buildings to look going forward, what heights are appropriate on what streets, should we have building setbacks to encourage better pedestrian flows in some areas? The design review committee would be better informed and able to make better decisions if there was clear long term vision for the town centre appearance.

- **Existing Buildings:** Are there minimum standards that should be met with regards to building appearance and maintenance. These need to be feedback through the District Plan review process.

1.3 PROCESS

Through a collaborative and engaging approach, Downtown QT, plans to develop greater insight around trends, opportunity and risk that influence the commercial dynamics in the town centre. This would involve building on past consultations with stakeholders, wider discussions with industry groups and alignment with future council vision.

First Retail Group, along with Downtown QT's Manager would develop a comprehensive picture of future needs and how the CBD can best meet those through strategic development, optimising the retail and hospitality mix along with commercial collaborations.

The result would be a detailed strategy that would help guide future town centre initiatives.

Delivery: Consultation two months. Strategic Plan development one month.

1.4 COST

Significant financial resources and voluntary time have already been committed, in particular by the Chamber of Commerce, to get the Downtown QT group established. Downtown QT therefore seeks \$50,000 (plus GST) funding, to be included in the 10 Year Plan, to allow it to engage First Retail Group to complete the Queenstown Town Centre Strategic Plan.

The strategy will be reviewed, refined and developed annually. The costs of this are expected to be between \$20 and \$30 thousand. Downtown QT expects to make submissions to the 2016 and 2017 annual plan to cover those costs.

2.0 FRANKTON LIBRARY

2.1 BACKGROUND

The QLDC plans to develop a library "hub" at Frankton in 2020, with the facility projected to be 3 times the size of the current downtown Queenstown Library. At that point the council plans to reduce the Queenstown Library to a "shop front" facility. The council has included a figure of \$5.3 million in the TYP to develop the Frankton Library.

2.2 RETAIN MAIN LIBRARY SERVICES IN QUEENSTOWN

Downtown QT opposes the setting up of a major library facility in Frankton. The district's main library facility should continue to be in downtown Queenstown. The Queenstown Town Centre must remain a vibrant and dynamic place, which attracts not only tourists but residents as well. We

believe the library facilities should be retained and enhanced within the Town Centre Zone. The main library for the area should be a showcase and therefore must be located in downtown Queenstown.

3.0 LAKEVIEW CONVENTION CENTRE

3.1 BACKGROUND

The QLDC has resolved to investigate a change in the rating model for a convention centre to be built on the Lakeview site in downtown Queenstown. We support the establishment of a convention centre beside the Town Centre Zone.

3.2 RATING IMPLICATIONS

Downtown QT has not been able to canvas its members about whether they support the proposed new rating model, due to the fact the organisation has only recently been established. We do however acknowledge, in some cases the rating model places a heavy burden on certain individual CBD businesses. However we also note that for most, the rating costs are reasonable when the benefits are factored into the equation.

Downtown QT remains neutral on the new rating model. While Downtown QT accepts Town Centre Zone businesses are within the primary area of benefit, it would only support the new rating model if the QLDC made it a priority to secure a private development partner and investigate alternate funding models, including the investigation of a visitor levy to help offset the rating implications for Town Centre businesses.

Downtown QT supports the convention centre remaining in the TYP, while those options are further investigated.

Downtown QT Incorporated wishes to speak in support of its submission.

Submitted on behalf of Downtown QT Incorporated by the Chairperson Alastair Wood.

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