

Otago Southland Regional Land Transport Plans 2015-2021 Mid Term Review

Feedback from Active Transport Wanaka

1. Action Required in Wanaka, Now

Wanaka is at risk of becoming 'another Queenstown'. All the demographic data indicates that transport congestion will become rife in the town. Active transport is a key preventative measure but it requires investment now to prevent, rather than fix, the issue. We're seeking your support to future proof Wanaka.

2. Active Transport Wanaka - the Submitter

Over the last 18 months there has been a groundswell of support for active transport initiatives in Wanaka; a desire for the town to be bold and follow international trends in prioritising active over motorised transport to make our community healthy and vibrant.

Active Transport Wanaka was born out of this community groundswell. It is a collective of local organisations committed to developing a comprehensive cycling and walking network for the town. Organisations in the collective include Bike Wanaka (700 members), Upper Clutha Tracks Trust, Wanaka Community Board, Wanaka Primary School, Holy Family School, Mt Aspiring College and Bike'vember.

We imagine Wanaka as the envy of the rest of New Zealand, where most residents walk or bike daily, school drop off zones are virtually empty at 8.50am and 3.00pm, the town centre, schools and public amenities are connected by a comprehensive biking and walking network and where commuting from outlying residential areas is safe and seamless.

Active Transport Wanaka supports the idea that a cycling town is a happy, liveable town with healthier people, quieter roads, stronger community, improved air quality and an all-round nicer environment to live in.

3. Basis for our Submission

Wanaka is growing faster than anywhere else in the region. Gridlock is projected. Forward planning is required. Cycling is a key mode of travel that can address these challenges. Immediate action is required.

This statement is sourced directly from content in your Summary of Proposed variations to the Otago Southland Regional Land Transport Plans 2015 -2021:

At p.16: *“The strategy also responds to the need to listen to customers and provide better mode choice, including better public transport and safe walking and cycling linkages, to improve road safety and the resilience of the transport network.”*

At p42: *“...inadequate future-proofing can hinder us [...] providing for the different modes of travel sought by our communities (e.g. cycling)”*

At p.43 *“Wanaka could be the next town to experience gridlock, unless we make our systems more responsive to the growth in tourist travel occurring.”*

At p35: *“Tables 7 and 8 show the population growth forecast for urban areas in Otago and Southland,[...] Table 11 shows Wanaka is projected to grow fastest [...] This trend is already evident today.”*

Also at p.35 *“Table 8 highlights the need for forward planning of Wanaka’s transport system, so that this area, as it grows, does not experience the congestion issues faced by Queenstown in recent years.”*

It is in this context that we make our submission.

4. Specific Responses to the Existing OSR Land Transport Plan

- A. Wanaka Integrated Transport Programme Business Case
Start and End in 2020. Budget \$400,000.

Recommendation: That the funding for this programme business case be moved in to the 2018 year.

Progress on a number of Wanaka’s active transport initiatives hinge on the completion of this broader transport business case. We would like to capitalise on the current momentum we have in the community for investing in and embracing active transport. There is an expectation from the community that projects will be started in 2018.

There is deep concern in the community that we have not learned the lessons from Queenstown and that again investment will be the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff rather than the fence at the top. The sooner the business case is completed the better.

A reminder from the Report at p43: *Wanaka could be the next town to experience gridlock, unless we make our systems more responsive to the growth in tourist travel occurring.*

- B. Ballantyne Road Seal Extension (Wanaka) Safety QLDC
Start and End in 2018. Budget: \$2,100,000

Recommendation: That work undertaken on Ballantyne Rd either includes a segregated cycleway or allows for an easily implemented cycleway at a future date.

Wanaka Airport is anticipated to grow significantly over the next 10 years. We have identified the north side of Ballantyne Road as a cycle and walking route from the Airport to the Wanaka township. We encourage funders to seize the opportunity to invest in active transport options for new projects now, rather than having to retrospectively make upgrades in the future.

- C. Mt Aspiring Road Widening
Start 2018. End 2019. Budget: \$5,000,000

Recommendation: That work undertaken on Mt Aspiring Road provides for a segregated cycleway in both directions.

This stretch of road is notoriously dangerous given the lack of any shoulder on either side. It also compounds the parking problem at Mt Roy as there is no direct walking or cycling path from town to the base of the walk. The Millenium Track along the lakefront does provide a route but it is undulating and unappealing for individuals who are already embarking on a 5-6 hour hike to the Roys Peak summit and return.

Mt Aspiring Road is also frequently used by road cyclists for training.

Stage one of the network consists of the following key routes:

Schools to Pool - linking Holy Family Primary School, Wanaka Primary School and Mt Aspiring College with the (soon to be built) new primary school, swimming pool and recreation center. This is the network's center piece focussed on school children cycle safety and behavioural change through riding and walking from an early age.

Aubrey Road - refining and sealing the existing gravel cycleway from Albert Town to the schools. This will allow for safer and higher usage of children cycling to school from Albert Town and the new Northlake subdivision.

Anderson Road - increasing safety for cyclists on this very important cross town link.

Albert Town Bridge to Town - providing a safe commuter and recreational route for zoned children to bike to the new primary school, residents to commute from Hawea and Albert Town in to the town centre and recreational riders to return to town from riding Deans Bank, Hawea River, Newcastle and Upper Clutha tracks.

Town Center Loop - creating a safe cycling environment for residents and tourists to access and circumnavigate the downtown area.

Stage one of the network also consists of two key underpasses and two key areas of traffic calming:

Underpass One: SH84 intersection with 3 Parks development. **Underpass Two:** Aubrey Rd and Anderson Rd intersection.

Traffic Calming One: SH84 between Anderson Road roundabout and Ardmore St (end of SH84) roundabout. This incorporates the crossing of children on the Schools to Pool route. **Traffic Calming Two:** Gunn Road and Aubrey Road roundabout.

Supporting Rationale for this Investment

Wanaka's community is often ahead of the eight ball when it comes to trends in Active Transport and new vehicle technologies - electric car charging stations installed, GPS tracking of tourist travel habits undertaken, growth in active commuting means including a surge in e-bike purchases and usage. We'd love Wanaka to be seen as the region's active transport shining star!

We feel with that, with the right Urban Cycleway network, Wanaka would experience an exponential growth in commuting by Active Means. A statement that is backed by actual and increasing usage of Wanaka's existing (albeit fragmented) active transport network of paths and road verges. 2013's Census data shows approximately 14 percent of Wanaka residents cycle, walk or jog to work.^[1] i.e. close to 1,000 residents, well above the national average of 10 percent, commuted by Active Transport Means in 2013.

Wanaka is experiencing the fastest growth in population and tourism visitors numbers in the region - investing in improving Wanaka's Urban Cycleways in the short term will go a long way to prevent Wanaka's traffic congestion becoming that of Queenstown's.

In section 6 below we outline how Wanaka has voiced its strong opinions and desires to have an efficient, well linked Active Commuting Network - by not only showing up in droves to Active Transport forums and giving invaluable community feedback but our community have also invested financially in creating tools and survey maps - ready for implementation.

We need ORS to invest now to improve our Active Transport network and therefore reap the benefits of improved connectivity, accessibility and shifting more people towards alternative sustainable transport options. NB: a sought after benefit from p.43 of your Report.

Our community is keen to partner with OSR to help meet and exceed the challenges faced by ORS as outlined on p.43 of the *Proposed Variations* document January 2018 .

6. Wanaka Community's Desire for Better Cycle Infrastructure

We were disappointed that only Queenstown and Dunedin were referenced in the Report (at p.41) as demonstrating a strong groundswell of support for prioritising active transport.

Wanaka's residents are also passionate about improving the town's active transport options and planning for our exponential growth. There have been large turnouts with constructive feedback, the delivery of active transport network planning tools and affected behaviour change at the following recent events:

- 150 attendees - Active Transport Wanaka Forum, November 2017
 - Launch of Active Transport Network Master Plan and agree priorities
- 450 attendees - Save Sticky Forest Forum, February 2017
 - Bike and trail walking/running enthusiasts voicing their concern over the potential loss of mountain bike/walking trails for further urban property development. Note: these much loved tracks are located on land held in trust for Maori beneficiaries.
- 80+ attendees - Shaping our Future - Transport Forum, March 2017
 - Visioning workshop where participants provided feedback into the development of the Upper Clutha Transport Report
 - Report recommends short term implementation of "safe and attractive tracks, including commuter trails, with infrastructure that is fit for purpose connecting our communities residential, recreational, retail and business areas."
- 230+ active participants - Bike'vember, November 2016

- A sustainable transport awareness and behaviour change campaign. With over 20 community events, business partnerships, an interactive website and a successful social media campaign encouraging residents and visitors of the Upper Clutha to 'go by bicycle or other human powered transport for the 30 days of November'.
- Further, 130 participants completed a survey on Active Transport needs within the Upper Clutha

Upper Clutha residents have been showing up, actively participating and contributing significant amounts of volunteer time to fill the gap by developing community-led plans and addressing the need for the appropriate budgets to meet our immediate active transport infrastructure needs.

Our active community participation is backed by actual and increasing usage of Wanaka's existing (albeit fragmented) active transport network of paths and road verges. 2013's Census data shows approximately 14 percent of Wanaka residents cycle, walk or jog to work.^[1] i.e. close to 1,000 residents, well above the national average of 10 percent, commuted by Active Transport Means in 2013. **This is a trend we should be proud of and QLDC, RTCs and NZTA should seek to support with appropriate and safe commuting infrastructure.**

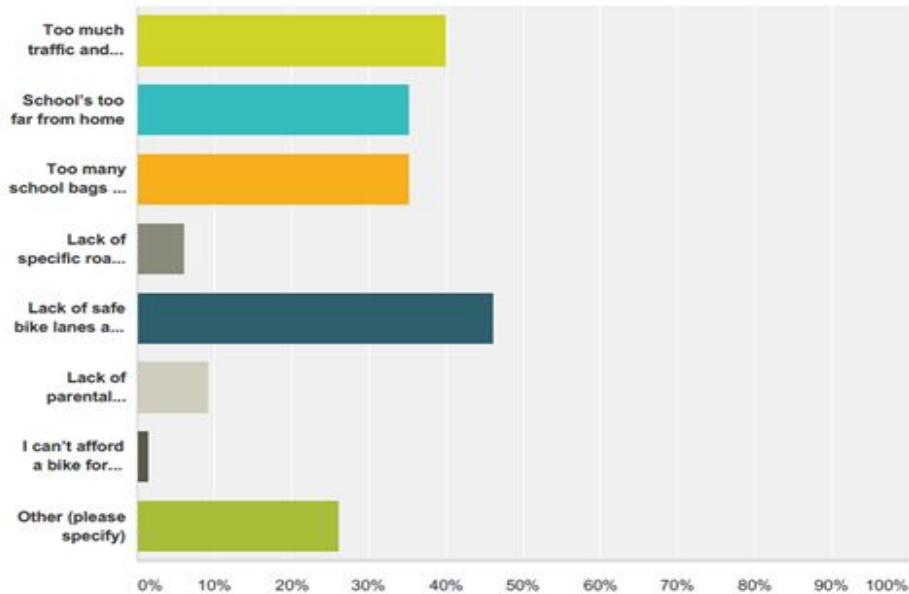
From Table 7, p.34 OSR *Current Situation including drivers for change* notes a conservative estimate that Wanaka's resident population numbers are expected to double from 6,800 in 2013 to 13,300 in 2043 (a 96% increase), with visitor numbers expected to grow at an even faster rate. With appropriate fit for purpose infrastructure available, it is anticipated that the Upper Clutha could have more than 3,000 residents commuting by Active Transport means.^[1]

It must be noted that there are significant barriers to the continued growth in cycling for transport in Wanaka, with concern for safety and lack of appropriate infrastructure high on the list. According to Bike'vember's survey conducted in December 2016, 130 people responded to the survey, with 50% of respondents having children. School aged children are a rapidly growing segment of our population, currently numbering circa 2,000 (including Hawea) out of an approx 10,000 permanent resident population. **Bike'vember parents cited "Lack of safe bike lanes and other bicycle infrastructure" and "Too much traffic and cars on the road" as the top 2 factors limiting children's participation in cycling** ⁽⁴⁾.

These barriers have taken their toll nationally with the number of secondary school students that cycle to school dramatically declining from 20% in 1990 to just 3% in 2014 ⁽³⁾. Wanaka residents would like to put an end to this declining trend and get their kids out and riding safely to our schools and to the pool again. Our local school surveys show that over 20% of students currently get to school by Active Means (biking, walking or scootering) in 2016. Over 50% of students commute by car, despite biking being the preferred travel mode in all 7 surveys since 2010.⁽⁵⁾

Q23 What do you think limits your children's participation in cycling? (select main 3 reasons)

Answered: 65 Skipped: 64



Further Feedback from the Community - Active Transport Wanaka Forum

We had 120 residents attend the Active Transport Wanaka public meeting on 30 November 2017. Specific feedback to questions we posed include:

1. Which proposed cycleway/upgrade is your number one preference?

- **Schools to pool = 80%** (linking Holy Family with Kelly's Flat reserve, Wanaka Primary, Mt Aspiring College, Lismore Park, across SH84, through the new school to the pool & Rec Center)
- Anderson Road = 8%
- Aubrey Road = 2%
- Bridge to town = 2%
- Town centre = 8%

2. If all five upgrades were implemented, would you walk or ride in Wanaka:

- a lot more = 37%
- **a little more = 47%**
- no change = 16%* (* a majority of those who voted 'no change' already ride/walk most of the time)

3. If you have school aged children; would these five upgrades see them walk or ride to school:

- a lot more = 40%
- **a little more = 50%**
- no change = 10%

4. Reflecting on the challenges facing Wanaka over the next 10 years, do you see better, safer cycling as:

- the number one priority = 1%
- **in the top three priorities = 85%**
- in the top five priorities = 14%

5. If you are a ratepayer, would you be prepared to see an increase in rates to support the delivery of this plan?

- **yes = 95%**
- no = 5%

7. Cycling's Impact on Tourism in Wanaka

In 2016 an independent visitor insights research company found that:

- **25%** of domestic visitors and
- **21%** of international visitors

associated mountain biking with the Wanaka region.

For the year ended October 2017 MBIE states that the visitor spend in the Wanaka region was **\$535 million**.

This gives an indication of the high value that bikers bring to our region. Our focus on an urban cycle network for Wanaka supports 'whole of family' cycling for tourists to Wanaka. It also provides a safe and efficient means for visitors to access local amenities and the off road trails in the surrounding area.

8. Hearing

Yes, we would like to be heard at the hearing.

9. Submitter Details

Active Transport Wanaka

29 January 2018

10. Sources

^[1] NZ Census 2013 - Main means of travel data

^[2] Shaping our Future Transport Report March 2017

^[3] Ministry of Transport, 25 Years of NZ Travel, 2014

www.transport.govt.nz/research/travelsurvey/25-years-of-nz-travel/

^[4] Bike'vember Public Survey Results 2016

^[5] Wanaka Primary School and Holy Family Catholic Schools annual Travel to School Surveys.

11. Appendices

A. Proposed variations to Otago-Southland Regional Land Transport Plan 2015-2021 (Page 35)

<https://www.orc.govt.nz/media/4217/section-2-current-situation-including-drivers-of-change.pdf>

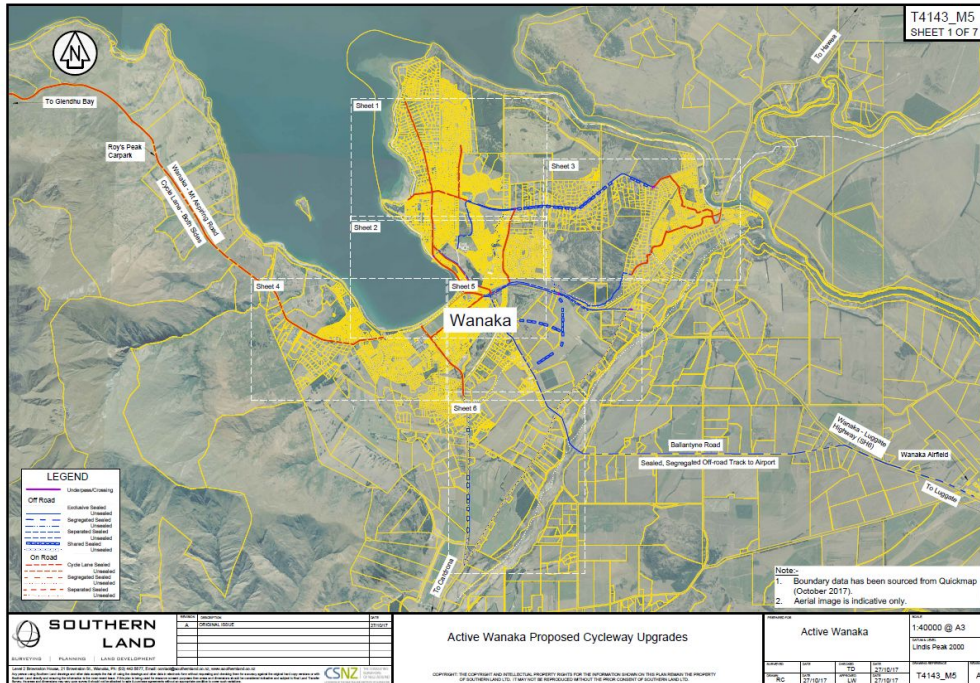
Table 8: Projected population growth for fastest growing urban areas in Otago and Southland, in percentage terms compared to 2013

Urban area	Projected growth (%) (medium growth scenario)	
	2013-23	2013-43
Wanaka	56	96
Queenstown	25	47
Cromwell	23	37
Arrowtown	15	35
Alexandra	8	12
Te Anau	10	10
Dunedin	7	10
Oamaru	5	7
Invercargill	5	4

Source: Statistics NZ table builder, accessed 14 September 2017

Table 8 highlights the need for forward planning of Wanaka's transport system, so that this area, as it grows, does not experience the congestion issues faced by Queenstown in recent years.

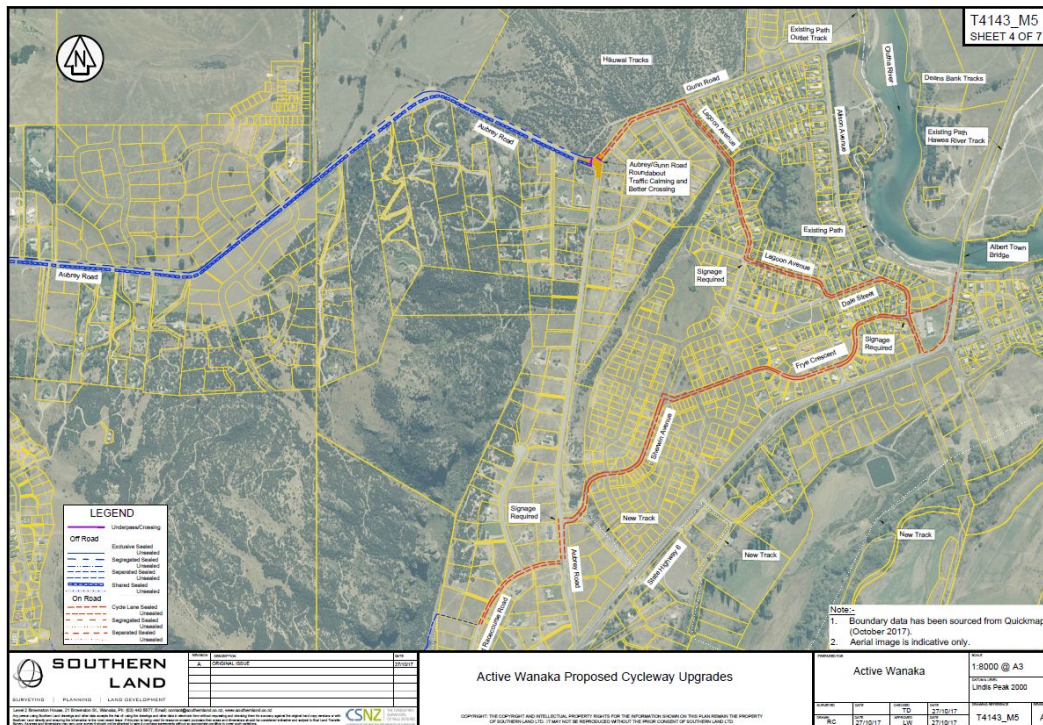
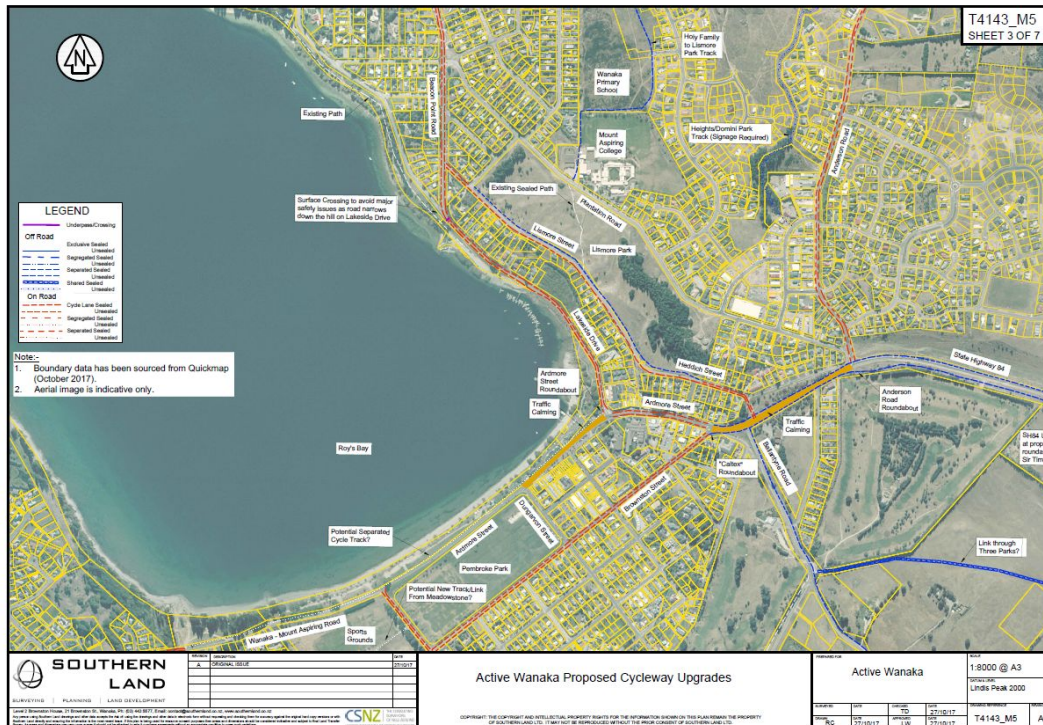
B. Active Transport Wanaka - Network Masterplan - November 2017.

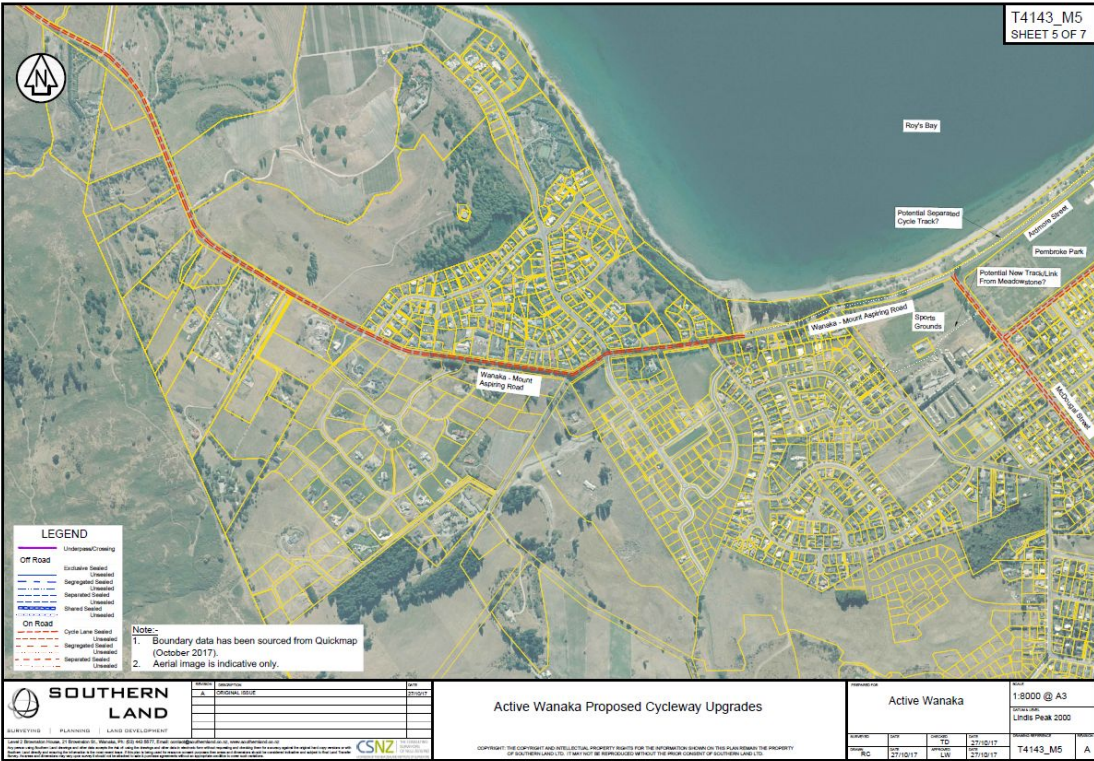


Map 1: Active Transport Wanaka Cycleway Upgrades - Network Overview

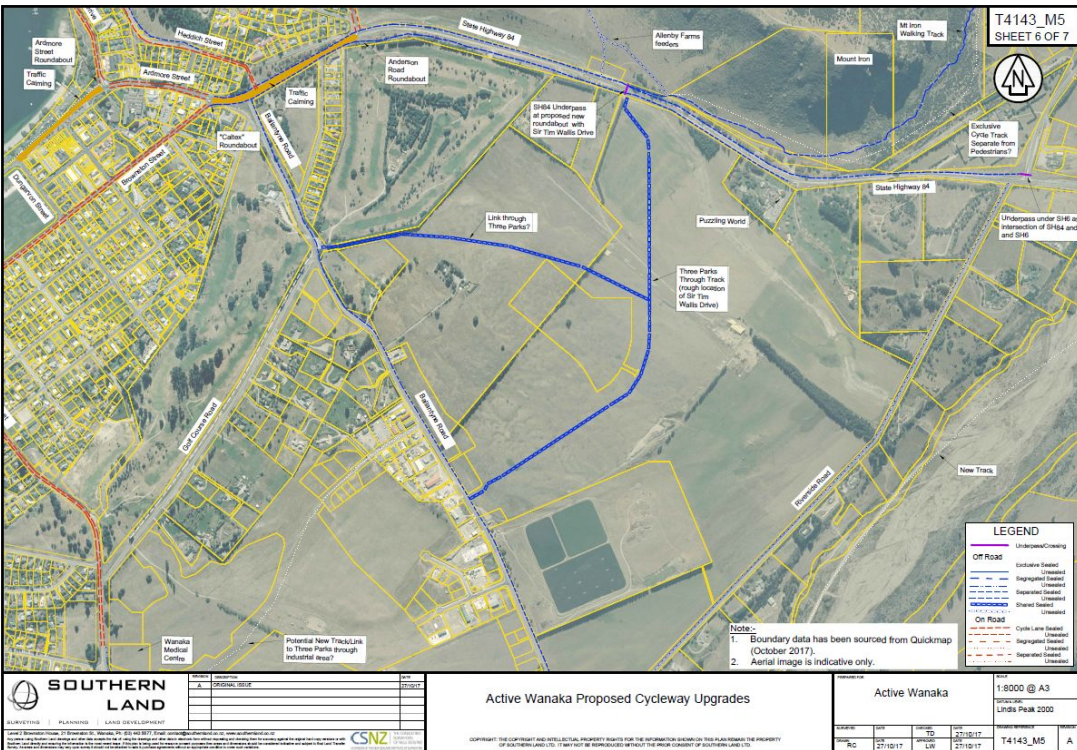


Map 2: Active Transport Wanaka Cycleway Upgrades - (Beacon Point Rd - Aubrey Rd)





Map 5: Active Transport Wanaka Cycleway - (Wanaka - Mt Aspiring Road)



Map 6: Active Transport Wanaka Cycleway - (Wanaka Township - State Highway 84 - Three Parks Development being recreation centre, swimming pool and new primary school)

