

Appendix 4: Current Baseline Analysis (2015/16)

Queenstown and Wanaka experience some traffic congestion at peak times, both seasonal and daily. Transport systems are rarely designed to cater for peak traffic as this would result in a lot of redundancy at off peak times and overinvestment in transport infrastructure.

Putting the current traffic congestion into context, it amounts to a few minutes extra travel at peak times. While this may seem significant from the perspective of a 20 minute trip in the Wakatipu Basin, or Wanaka area, it is not significant when compared to NZ wide, or international traffic congestion. Just ask a visitor from Sydney, or Auckland whether they think Queenstown and Wanaka have a traffic congestion issue...

There are a number of transport solutions currently being worked on, and planned for current and future development, that will alleviate some of the current peak traffic congestion within the Queenstown and Wanaka areas.

The current traffic congestion has arisen as the result of rapid growth following the 2008 Global Financial Crisis and high fuel prices that saw the number of vehicle trips being made drop during the period of the Global Financial Crisis. Figure 1, showing State highway traffic count data in the Wakatipu Basin shows a decline in traffic during the Global Financial Crisis, apart from the Frankton area, which could be attributed to the continuing growth of the Queenstown International Airport.

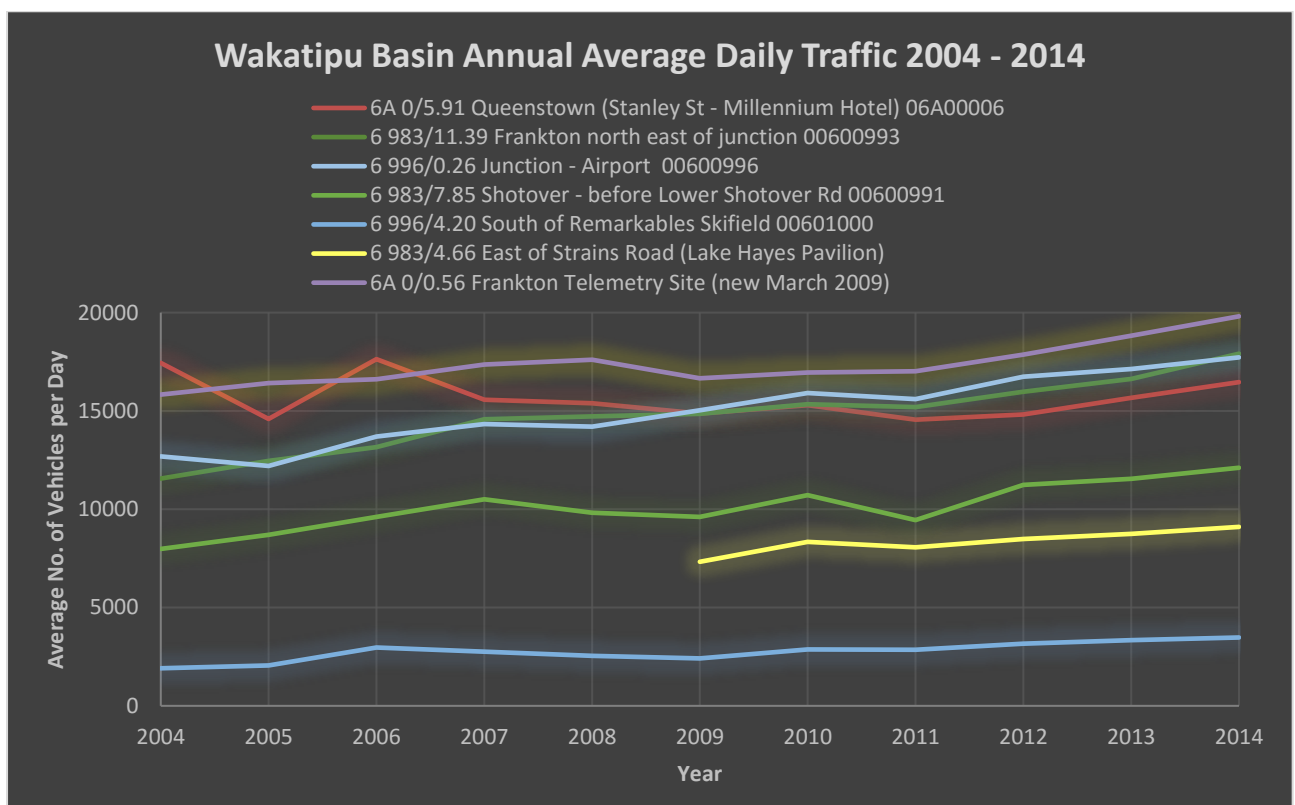


Figure 1: Average Annual Daily Traffic data 2004 – 2014, data source NZ Transport Agency

Nationally the demand for car travel has plateaued over the past 10 years¹ (even before the Global Financial Crisis). There are a number of external social and economic factors that

¹ Future Demand, NZ Ministry of Transport, November 2014

influence car use, e.g. the Global Financial Crisis, fuel prices, wealth, location (rural or urban), accessibility to goods and services, etc.

Figure 2 below shows the growth in traffic on State highways within the Wakatipu Basin over the past 10 years normalised to 2004. It can be seen that Frankton Road has dropped below 2004 traffic volumes and has not made it back to 2004 levels, yet. There has been some significant growth in traffic around the Frankton area, with the count site northeast of Frankton Junction experiencing 7% traffic growth in 2014 alone. This is compared to 0-2% traffic growth nationally.

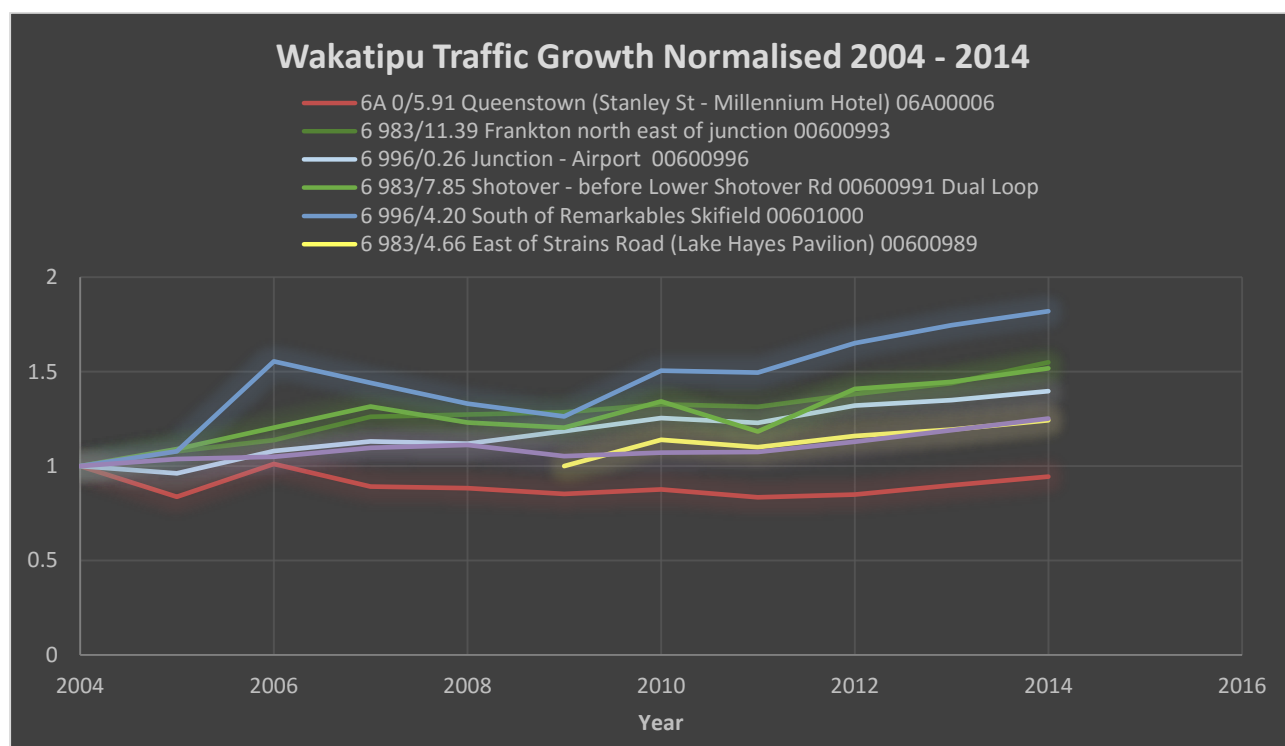


Figure 2: Average Annual Daily Traffic growth 2004 – 2014, data source NZ Transport Agency

The NZ Ministry of Transport has done a report on future demand to look at how NZ's transport system could or should evolve in order to support mobility in the future. The report is based on scenario planning and can be found at the following link:

<http://www.transport.govt.nz/ourwork/keystrategiesandplans/strategic-policy-programme/future-demand/>

Traffic volumes on SH6 through the Kawarau Gorge from Cromwell and beyond are approx. 3,500 vehicles per day on average (year 2014). Just east of the Crown Range turnoff the traffic is up to approx. 4,200 vehicles per day. By the time you get to Frankton traffic amounts to almost 18,000 vehicles per day. This is a significant increase in traffic over a short distance (approx. 13km) and suggests a significant amount of local trip generation within the Wakatipu Basin.

Similarly on SH6 south of Jacks Point there is 2,400 vehicles per day, at the Kawarau Falls Bridge there is 7,100 vehicles per day, and at Frankton 17,700 vehicles per day. This is set to increase markedly with the Jacks Point and Hanley Downs residential developments, at approx. 3,500 sections, generating a total of 28,000 to 35,000 vehicles per day.

Constructing new roads will only relieve congestion in the short term as evidence² shows that building new roads simply generates more traffic resulting in congestion. The Queenstown Lakes area, with its mountainous terrain and numerous rivers and lakes means that road construction is expensive, and difficult to provide multiple road transport links, e.g. increasing the capacity of Frankton Road, or providing another road via Queenstown Hill, or Tuckers Beach/Arthurs Point, will only increase the traffic trying to enter Queenstown, which currently causes congestion at peak times (and it's generally acknowledged by a number of groups that the Queenstown CBD area should have less traffic and be more pedestrian friendly, more on this later...).

The Queenstown Lakes area also experiences weather extremes with snow and ice in winter resulting in some issues with connectivity at times with road closures, and with safety to road users, especially those that are inexperienced with such conditions.

If Queenstown wants to continue to grow and attract domestic and international visitors, which appears to be the case, then the good old days of 15-20 years ago when you could drive around the district with no delays, will not return as the growth has increased the number of vehicles on our roads. It is not a consideration that the Queenstown Lakes will voluntarily cap its resident or visitor numbers.

The current peak traffic congestion in Frankton and Queenstown is likely the result of resurgent and rapid growth in the local area following the Global Financial Crisis and a time lag until transport infrastructure improvements catch up. This is as the result of a lack of integration between development growth and transport planning, but also local trends not mirroring national trends in traffic growth.

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² Future Demand, NZ Ministry of Transport, November 2014

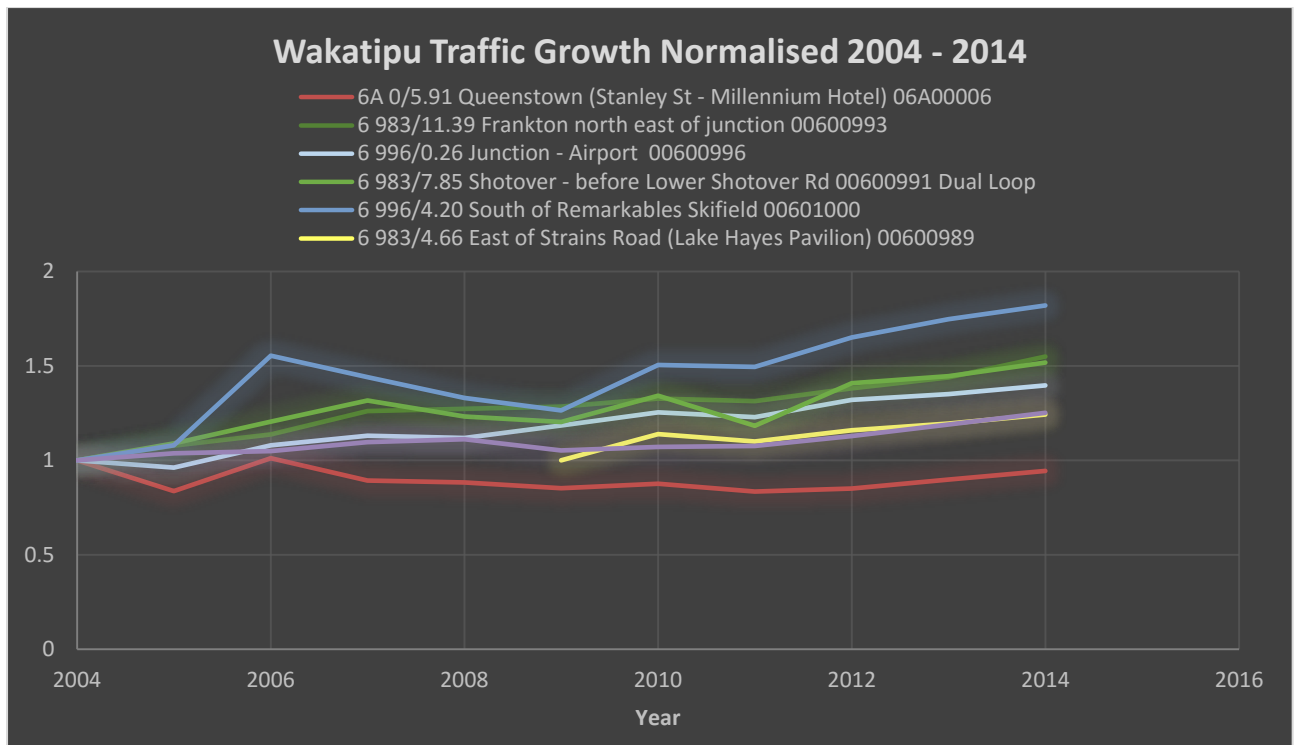


Figure 2: Average Annual Daily Traffic growth 2004 – 2014, data source NZ Transport Agency

Tourism is the Queenstown Lakes largest market and the number of visitors (60% average day to 215% peak³) often outnumbers permanent residents (who total approx. 30,000 in 2013⁴) making it difficult to locally fund infrastructure to support the tourism market.

Tourism has meant that Queenstown has been lucky to develop an ever growing international airport. The airport provides the local and surrounding regions (Otago and Southland) with an international gateway, and essentially acts as a park and ride for the region as evidenced by vehicles parked around the streets close to the airport.

The international airport also provides easy access (with the exception of weather, and darkness at the moment) for domestic and international visitors to Queenstown. 1.4 million passengers passed through Queenstown Airport in the financial year ending June 2015⁵ and continue to grow. The airport is moving to night flights over the next couple of years, and while this is to ease current peak take-off and landing demand, also provides for further growth into the future.

Visitors arriving at Queenstown airport have a number of options for travel; shuttle, bus, taxi, rental vehicle (or walk as I've seen some doing).

In recent years a lot of visitors have preferred to travel independently by rental vehicle rather than on tours by bus, increasing the number of vehicles on the districts roads. This is evidenced by the number of rental vehicle companies in and around Queenstown and the airport, and the number of rental vehicles parked in the paddocks on Frankton Flats. The

³ Shaping Our Future Visitor Industry Task Force Final Report December 2014

⁴ Statistics NZ 2013 Census data

⁵ Queenstown Airport website <http://www.queenstownairport.co.nz/corporate/planning-and-performance>

reason for this may be freedom at not being tied into a tour schedule, or that there are few other options to get visitors around on other modes of transport.

As well as creating some nuisance on our roads with slow driving and crashes (although not overrepresented as reported in the media), rental vehicles add to the number of vehicles on our roads, when accessing hotels and apartments, restaurants, ski rental, skiing and sightseeing e.g. Milford Sound, West Coast, Glenorchy, etc. A rationalisation of rental vehicle accessibility may be required in the future, or may happen naturally as space for rental storage evaporates with development of Frankton Flats, or the wider banning of cars in the likes of the Queenstown CBD.

The ski fields generate additional traffic in winter at morning and evening peak periods to add to current congestion woes at Frankton and in the Queenstown CBD. Continuing growth of the ski fields and limited space to provide parking has seen an increase in bus transport in recent years. While visitors to the Queenstown Lakes are happy to use these buses and costs compare favourably to public transport in their home cities, whereas locals are reluctant to use these buses. This is possibly because locals tend to have season passes and ski for part of the day before going to work, or doing other things, whereas visitors are generally here to ski and will spend the day on the mountain. The transport strategy for the ski fields needs to cater for these two types of skier differently. There are currently no alternatives to road travel, such as a gondola, or on mountain accommodation.

Town Planning, Urban Design/Planning, Integrated Planning, Spatial Planning – the integration of landscape architecture, architecture, civil engineering (roads, sewer, water supply, storm water and communications systems), and public administration within a technical and political process concerned with the use of land, protection of the environment and public welfare for the process of designing and shaping cities, towns and villages with the goal of making urban areas functional, attractive and sustainable.