

Otago Regional Council transport comments on the Matakanui Gold Limited Bendigo—Ophir Gold Project fast-track application

20 March 2026

As per Land Transport Management Act 2003, Otago Regional Council’s (ORC) responsibilities as the public transport authority for Otago include:

- Planning public transport networks
- Designing, procuring and funding public transport services
- Influencing land use via regional policy statements and regional plans developed in accordance with the Resource Management Act 1991

In fulfilling these responsibilities ORC has an interest in the Bendigo Ophir Gold Project application (the Project) as a significant trip generating activity. ORC Transport has assessed the application’s alignment with the following strategic documents to produce these comments:

- Proposed Otago Regional Policy Statement 2021 (pORPS)
- Otago Southland Regional Land Transport Plan 2021-2031 (2024 Mid-term Review)
- Otago Regional Public Transport Plan 2025-2035

These comments primarily consider the application’s Integrated Transport Assessment (document B.30).

Provision of staff transport

The provision of buses for worker travel from Wānaka, Cromwell and Alexandra and the promotion of ride sharing arrangements through the Project Traffic Management Plan is consistent with pORPS objective *EIT-TRAN-08* and the Regional Land Transport Plan policy 4.3 of transport-related greenhouse gas emissions being reduced in the region.

pORPS objective EIT-TRAN-09

EIT-TRAN-09 – Effects of the transport system

The contribution of transport to Otago’s *greenhouse gas* emissions is reduced and communities are less reliant on fossil fuels for transportation.

RLTP policy 4.3

Policy 4.3	Facilitate change in transport demand patterns to increase productivity and align with climate aspirations, focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainable transport practices.
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Providing staff buses to encourage the reduction of private vehicle travel would also enable the Project to reduce its negative impacts on road performance and safety, particularly on State Highway 8 (SH8). This aligns with pORPS objective *EIT-INF-04* of effective, efficient and safe state highway infrastructure supporting economic development while managing adverse effects.

pORPS objective EIT-INF-04

EIT-INF-04 – Provision of infrastructure

Effective, efficient, safe and resilient *infrastructure, nationally significant infrastructure and regionally significant infrastructure* enables the people and communities to provide for their social and cultural well-being, their health and safety, and supports sustainable economic development and growth in the region, while adverse *effects* are managed.

We would encourage the applicant to prioritise the objective of the Project Traffic Management Plan to minimise the additional private vehicle movements generated by the Project. This includes the consideration of extending staff buses to Queenstown if demand warrants.

Impact on public transport services

We identify no notable effects of the Project on existing public transport services in the region, including exempt services delivered by commercial operators. ORC does not currently deliver any services near the site area or in Wānaka, Cromwell or Alexandra. While commercial operators such as InterCity provide services through these centres and along SH8 at Ardgour Road, the moderate increase of vehicle movements – projected to be an additional 400 vehicles per day (vpd) at the peak construction phase and 210 vpd through the operational phase – would have minimal impact on these services.

ORC is currently investigating the potential for future public transport services in the area including Wānaka, Cromwell and Alexandra as per the Regional Public Transport Plan rural network aspirations (presented from page 59 of the plan). If such services were implemented, we would consider the Project to have a similarly negligible impact to existing exempt services.