

Speech for Urban Intensification Variation Hearing – Wayne Bennison (04.08.25)

Tēnā koutou katoa, and thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

My name is Wayne Bennison, and I am speaking on behalf of myself and my partner Hamish. We are residents of Remarkables Crescent. We appreciate the work the Council is doing to plan for growth in our district, and we acknowledge that this can be challenging. We wanted to speak today as we are real people that live here, and are part of this community.

Four years ago, we finally were able to buy a home of our own and were fortunate enough to settle in Remarkables Crescent. We were drawn to its quiet charm, the family-friendly atmosphere, and the higher sunshine hours that make winter bearable in Queenstown. We didn't just buy a house—we invested in a life here together.

So when we saw the proposed shift to medium density zoning for Remarkables Crescent and Kawarau Place, including encouragement of three-storey buildings, we were very surprised. This is not just a change in zoning—it's a full transformation of the neighbourhood we call home.

We don't want to get bogged down in each specific rule, but give you a perspective of people that live in this little pocket of Frankton. We want to focus on four main points

1. The impact on our community character and amenity
2. The proximity to the Remarkables Park Special Zone
3. Why just our streets are being rezoned?
4. Parking and public transport concerns

1. The Impact on Our Community Character and Amenity

Our area is currently zoned Low Density Residential, and we understand the need for some infill development. We are a prime example of this, as we live in a front unit on a unit title. However, the proposed change to Medium Density Residential is a big change.

We are the people that live in this area. Our neighbour, built a lot of the houses on the street and raised their kids here. Our other neighbour, also built their house in the 80s, and are now enjoying retirement in the same home. The long term resident feel of the neighbourhood is unique within the Queenstown area. Other suburbs are either transient, full of visitor accommodation, or are 'too new' to get that long term feeling.

The encouragement of three-storey buildings will significantly alter the streetscape, increase shading, and reduce the very important sunlight in winter. Recession planes are only somewhat effective.

If more apartment like buildings are encouraged, then it lends itself to more visitor accommodation, like AirBnb. This will detract from our community feel.

The medium density proposal risks eroding the family-friendly, spacious feel of our neighbourhood. Why can't the current zoning rules stay as is, and infill development happen appropriately in our little area?

2. Proximity to Remarkables Park Special Zone

The Remarkables Park Special Zone, right next door, already allows for very high-density development, including large retail areas, schools, and high-rise buildings.

This zone was specifically designed to accommodate intensive urban activity. It is intended to support a mix of residential, commercial, and visitor accommodation. It also spans a large area and includes Whakatipu High School.

At the moment, a lot of the land in this zone is still relatively vacant. Shouldn't the development be encouraged and utilised in that zone, rather than just be used for storage of all the rental cars.

If high-density living is needed, it can be achieved within this existing zone, without spilling into neighbouring low-density residential areas.

3. Why just our streets are being rezoned?

We note that no area within the airport overlay is being re-zoned, probably due to noise concerns from the airport. Potentially this is why other nearby low-density zones were not re-zoned to medium density.

It feels like our area was selected not because it's ideal, but because it's one of the few remaining options outside the airport overlay and is not part of the Remarkables Park Special Zone

While we understand the principle of locating development near transport and amenities, this feels more like a default choice for our little area.

4. Parking and public transport concerns

Parking pressures will worsen. With the removal of national car parking minimums, developers are no longer required to provide off-street parking. In Queenstown, people need cars for skiing, biking, and exploring the region, so not having a car is unrealistic.

Public transport, while improving, cannot replace the flexibility that residents and visitors need. Without parking requirements, our quiet streets will become full of cars parked on the street. We are already limited to 48 hour parking restrictions, which has been a debated topic in the past.

Market forces alone won't fix this. Land value is so high, that off street parking will not be a priority. Increasing density, will reduce the availability of on street parking.

Conclusion

In closing, we urge you to reconsider the proposed medium density zoning for Remarkables Crescent and Kawarau Place. We support thoughtful infill growth in our little area, but not at the expense of the character, sunlight, and liveability of our neighbourhood.

If you get a chance, you should take a drive through our streets, and consider the significant change three storey medium density would do to our area.

Why not use the zone we already have—like the Remarkables Park Special Zone—to meet housing needs, while keeping our area of Frankton a place people want to live, for the long term.

Thank you

