

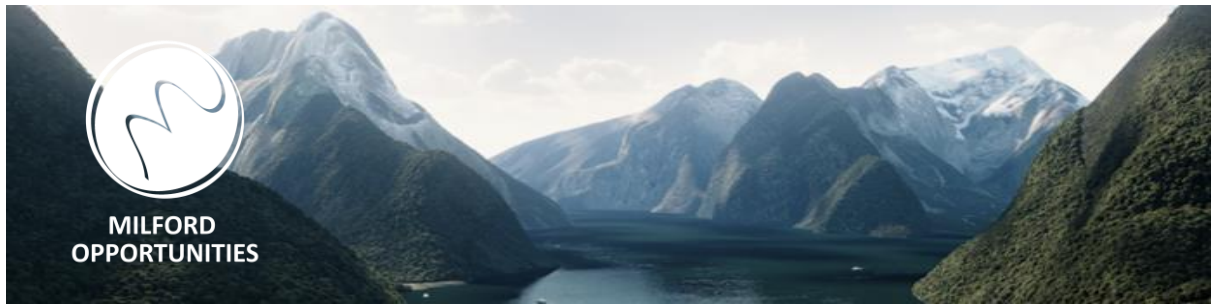
Milford Corridor Engagement Session

4 May 2023

Milford Opportunities Hub – Te Anau

Attendees

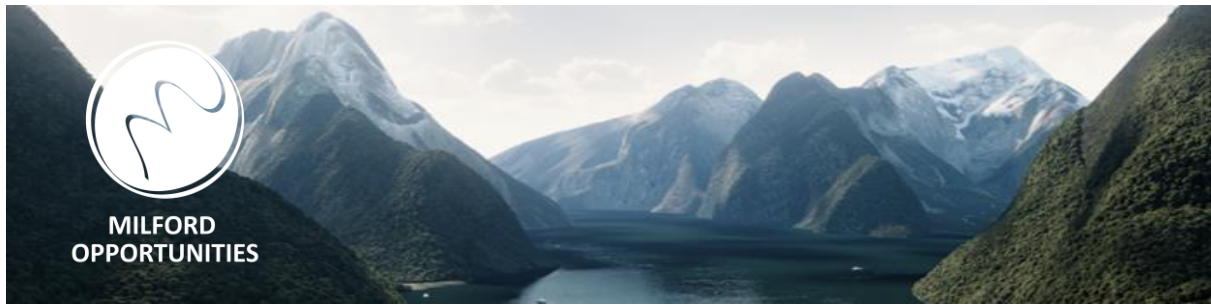
Organisation Represented
Fiordland Tramping and Outdoor Recreation Club
TrackNet
Gear Hire - Car relocater Track Hopper
Department of Conservation
Envy Experiences
Tourism Industry Aotearoa
Wild Fiordland
Queenstown NZ
Southland Conservation Board
Real NZ
Ngā Tahu Tourism
Milford Sound Tourism Limited
Trips and Tramps
Southland Fish and Game
Te Anau resident



Introduction

Purpose / structure
Welcome and safety briefing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Setting out ground rules and purpose for the meeting, including MS Teams etiquette to ensure all those attending are heard (online or in person) • Purpose was to test the feasibility of the masterplan not relitigate it.
<p>Project team wanted to learn two things from this meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What you think of the proposals in the masterplan as it relates to the Milford Road corridor, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise and develop landscape, conservation, and cultural experiences. • Introduce a managed access and transportation model. • Charge international visitors an access fee. • Reorganise Milford Sound Piopiotahi to remove visitor conflicts. Modernise infrastructure at Milford Sound Piopiotahi 2. What are some of the good things, some of the not so good things, and some impacts and alternative options.

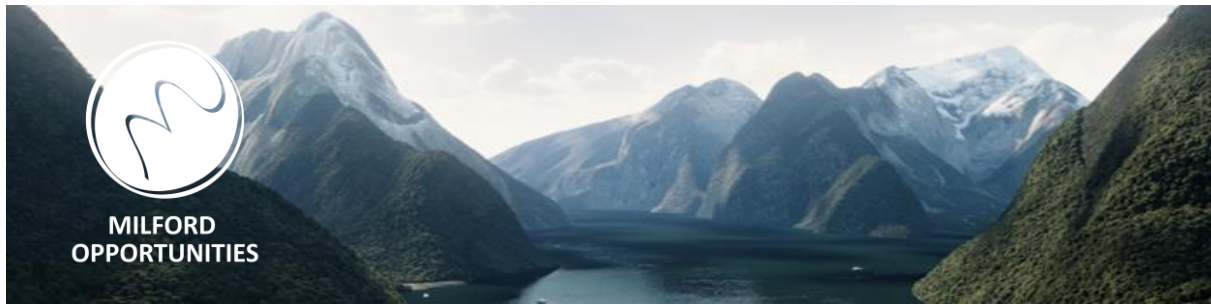
Background
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet has endorsed the funding for stage three. Included in the masterplan are concepts, we are feasibility testing to see if they could work and understand any implications. • The project will prepare a business case to go back to cabinet. • We are in the early part of stage three – we are not trying to prove, defend or justify the masterplan at all costs. We are testing whether the concepts are feasible, if they aren't, what is the next best option. • Things that we want to traverse with this group in relation to the transport model. It is currently quite a varied model, and we want to be sure that we have considered everything for the scopes of works. What transport options are available in the model. Looking at the corridor itself, the activities at the nodes.



Milford Corridor

Managed access and transportation model:

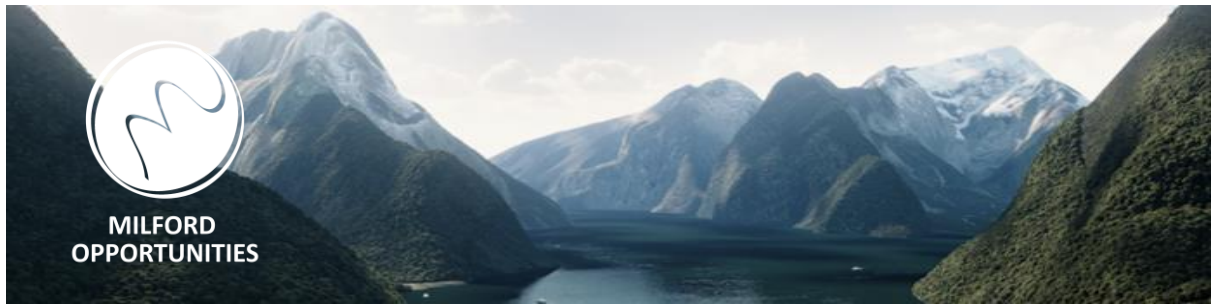
Feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here representing Southland Fish and Game. • We need to understand how we can have our cake and eat it. Our members enjoy the remoteness, recreation, and the place itself. Our people fish that river, its more than just fishing, it is the remoteness. The remoteness is degraded by constant stream of vehicles going in there. • What is proposed looks good, but we need access for our people including those who hunt, goose shoot, fish etc. Our members will not be using the hubs, they want to be away from them. They want to be able to drive in to hunt and fish. How do we get our people in and out. • Remoteness and balance with access. • Rental vehicles, need more compliance, controls, and education. • There are no controls over the numbers going in on that road. Rental car operators push people down there with a complete lack of knowledge of the road conditions. We are harming people on that road. No skills and ability to be driving that road. • Other operators using that road don't complain anymore, poor / dangerous driving behaviour is all too common. Excuses include people running late and are prepared to take the risk in case they miss their boat tour or are in a hurry to get back to Queenstown. Lives and their health are at risk. We should not support a model that harms our people. • We need to look at the numbers and control measures. Skills to travel safe, enable people who can drive it. • Our members are skilled back country people with rods, rifles which is difficult to manage on hop on hop off system. Potentially produce a firearms licence, hunting permit as a way to control access. • We need the right people to lower that pressure and demand.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always had that park and ride mentality to get people on the road. Some rental cars companies did ban people once on the Milford Road, when it was gravel.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have been driving that road in and out for 30 years. Seen the numbers increase from 10,000 to 500,000. See a lot of interesting sights. Reducing the rental cars would solve some of the issues. Milford Road Alliance would have data to back that up. • Car parks in Milford increased, rental cars are at the centre of that. Inbound tour operators, join and book people on tours. • Lord of the Rings release 2012 – 2015 created a surge of increased numbers. Stats would tell us that. Attempts have been made to spread the load via an increase in boat cruises earlier and later in the day.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was the people hiring cars, this was obvious.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People now book themselves online because it is easy. We would like to encourage people to take a bus tour, part of that experience is the trip in. We would like to give personal advice, but people book on devices.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have plenty of dangerous / impatient driver dash cam footage to show you.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor driving starts at Te Anau, not halfway down the valley, it just gets worse.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let's talk about the concept of managing access, is it fair to say that this concept is reasonably supported? You've talked about rental cars restriction? Or a licence or type of licence? Is there support for that or concern?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whatever you do, people will break the rules. Rules can't be too flexible.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic that goes through at peak times. Couple of hour periods. If you don't have NZ driver's licence, then you should be required to get a permit or just don't drive it, possibly younger drivers could be controlled.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At peak times there is no parking. As soon as there is a hint of snow, the road is closed. Possible road would stay open if there were professional drivers able to drive it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone driving a car has to park a car in Milford. Takes up space for other types of visitor experience or natural values. Supportive of managing access.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening to the comments, re-numbers on the road and thinking a lot around managing those numbers. We have to be fair and transparent. • How do you manage that industry, like DOC managed huts? • I just want to raise the topic of fairness. What is the optimal number the Milford Road can handle? What is the optimal number and how do we allocate that number fairly? • Coaches v rental car - is that the best use. Should we be looking at 'x' amount of people. We should be considering the carbon footprint.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree re-fairness points. Single person operator's person of view. Employees, operators need to travel in a single car, it gets tricky and complicated. If we go straight to regulation, we draw a box and must keep it inside that. • Is regulation the only option to consider? Peak traffic times, what's causing those peak traffic times? More or better solutions.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why that person is travelling, what is driving those traffic times. What is going on with the business? Instead of regulating anyone. There are lots of reasons people go down that road, regulation may not be the answer, effects a lot of people. What can be done by the businesses that drive that traffic?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volumes change at certain times / seasons. Boat schedules, use of road ranges from 5am – 10pm at night. We all have seen the bad behaviours on the road. Parking of campervans. These migrate back to busiest summer season, but there shouldn't be a blanket solution. Volumes and challenges in winter are different and are seasonal. Summer v winter. Traditional off season and road conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughts on any infrastructure solutions? What infrastructure is required to help manage this issue re numbers?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking is the critical thing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the management implications have had positive impact, but also negative one. Lights at the homer tunnel create a surge after a delay. Often causes poor driving behaviour. It was common to issue tickets after delays at the tunnel. Management often causes problems.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downer & NZTA are focused on safety and infrastructure. The environmental impact of their works to date often conflict with MOP Masterplan Key Concept 1 objective "consolidate infrastructure and pare it back to sensitively integrate into the landscape". For example, the apparently redundant three lane section of SH94 in the Hollyford Valley adjacent to Sinks Bridge, added in 2020, is only two minutes drive time from a subsequent three lane controlled stop at the Homer Tunnel.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree with the points around carbon footprint.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't see a huge problem with restrictions on access. Carbon benefits and genuine options, while providing for recreational experiences. People love the self-drive. You could fill the corridor with car parks, and it still wouldn't be enough for the demand
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On that point, the energy tender is feasibility testing lowering carbon for transport and infrastructure. • It is front of mind. • It's a different take in relation to managing access. Things that you might consider in a vehicle.



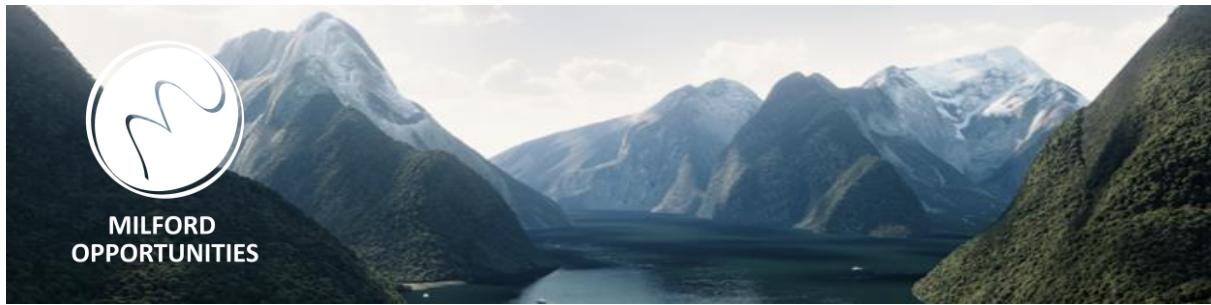
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunters and recreational fishing people travel alone and have a reasonable amount of skill level driving off road.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People fly in to go hunting, but more to Doubtful Sound, not so many up Milford Road. • Carbon neutral buses v motor cars. Per person, a bus is already more carbon efficient than conventional cars. • Carbon neutral – Milford is not a place to experiment. Hydrogen, batteries. These all need to be proved. Need to have the people here in Te Anau to fix it. Local mechanics etc. Transition period needs to be part of that. Zero carbon solution should come later. • Working towards a transitional phase. Before you buy a big fleet of buses, we want to be careful.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are looking at research and call upon other examples replicated around the globe. Tried and tested before anyone buys a bus.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From a feasibility perspective, DOC traversed the concept of resident v international access fees. Bunch of surveys and research, value they saw, reasonably strong feedback that visitors were willing to pay for it. Domestic example.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An opportunity to turn a threat or weakness opportunity to using new technology. Great opportunity. Electric bus technology already exists. The ORC and Canterbury network exist with greater infrastructure. Encourage new industry and tech. Opportunity for Te Anau to grow its base. The technology is out there. Prove you can do it in Milford and Te Anau, you can do it anywhere. If you are thinking on cars, hydrogen. • Should take that threat or weakness and turn it into an opportunity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • User of a Tesla. Bespoke tours for 2 -3 passengers. Larger buses v smaller operators. We offer a bespoke option. Been doing it for 4 years now. • Technology is advancing and is out there if we need it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree with a lot of the views here. • MSTL are looking at solutions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What people need to look at are stats. Where are the crashes occurring and the time of day, i.e., we know there is ice at Knobs Flat. • How do we lower pressure on recreational people. Open to that point. • There are a lot of problems on the corridor from Te Anau. • Potential to look at a two-hub system. People underestimate how long the drive is from Queenstown. At Devils Staircase realise they are going to miss the boat. If Te Anau was a starting point would decrease the pressure. The near misses, passing on double yellow, blind corners.



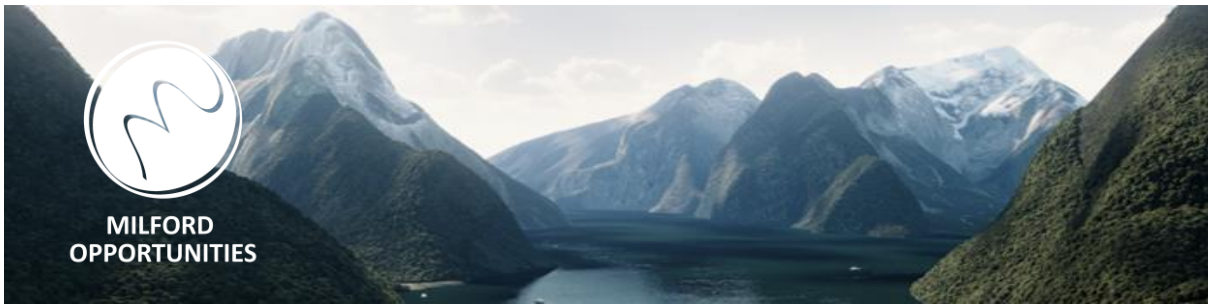
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milford Road is ranked 3rd highest for personal risk of injury on NZ highways. • Massively underreported due to coverage. See it every single day. Don't report it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there was going to be changes, opportunity to have lights removed from tunnel, revert to two lanes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preferential treatment at lights for park and ride transport? That could be a way to override the control. Encourage users to travel that way. Recreational boat user has more time and therefore could wait.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We completed a business satisfaction survey. People say that the road is a significant highlight in itself. Typically, they are glad they have done it. They get to hear a story.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree, huge value for money before they have even stepped on the boat.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our operation is reliable and gives people confidence. • People are not all taking their cars in, instead are getting on one coach. Some tourists do a lot of driving and are keen for a break from driving. Operators provide a reliable solution.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current buses are massive. Infrastructure allowing new stuff to evolve that is in line with the vision of Fiordland National Park Plan (FNPP), including cycling.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting the balance right, recreational fishing people don't want a cycle trail by rivers. They are in there for the remoteness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the bus tour point, people feel informed, a tour adds value. People are often travelling in NZ for a couple of weeks before they arrive in Southland, they enjoy the break from driving and enjoy being driven.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re cycling comments. FNPP does not permit cycling. Blue skies project, current state legislation won't allow those things.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are several things in the masterplan that do not align within current legislation. Through feasibility work, we will get a clear direction about whether we are comfortable to push the boundaries on that. • Acknowledge that it is a bugbear for cycling trails around here and the country.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some shorter-term solutions could include removing some of the restrictions soon. Like the pull-over areas, they are constrained to be within 5m of the centre line due to the nature of FNPP.



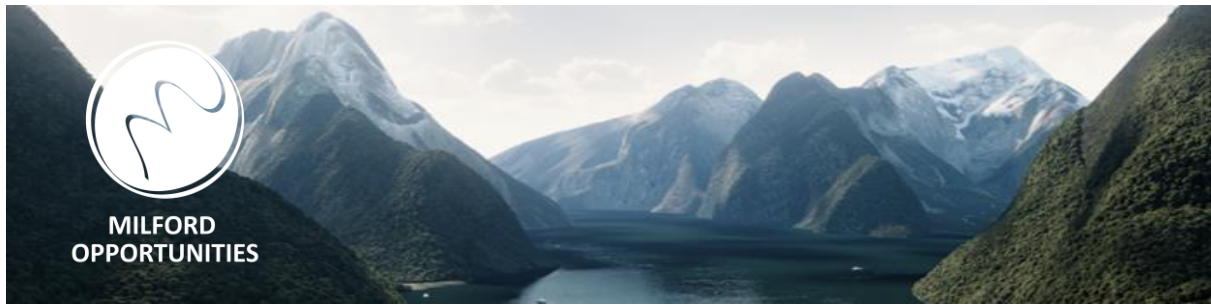
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at allowing things to be fixed in the short term.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are quick wins, it sits in the FNPP. It causes so many issues for us all.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have seen 50 or so boat trailers along Deepwater Basin. • Vehicle and trailers is a growing problem that needs to be sorted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational fishers are all out there chasing tuna. It is going to get worse. Doubtful and Milford are the only options, but Milford better option for launching. Someone posts a fish on social media and nek minute.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you meet one of those boats coming the other way, there is not a lot of room. Combined space causes problems.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to be flexible, the sea fishing changed very quickly when the tuna arrived.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the limitations and restrictions points, where are all the Queenstown buses going to go? They are not getting any smaller. If you do park and ride, does that mean all our vehicles are stopped? • This places a lot of uncertainty on operators. • At what stage do we invest? With concessions expiring there is no certainty. • Needs to be talked about.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People also want the small experience.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views on how to manage the international and domestic visitor. Permit for car parking? When you get there, you know you have space which would avoid situations like we saw on the state highway near the Deepwater Basin Road intersection where yellow bollards were erected to reduce parking on the shoulder – parking at times created a single lane road. • Understanding the different types of services that you provide as operators helps feasibility testing to understanding how things could work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The permit thing for operators. Are there any updated thoughts how this could / would be managed for operators specifically?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing further than stage two at this point, recognising that there is an operator group in the mix too who have a greater need to get in and out more regularly and may need parking. Similarly, contractors would need to be catered for as they are working often on short notice that they need to be in Milford.



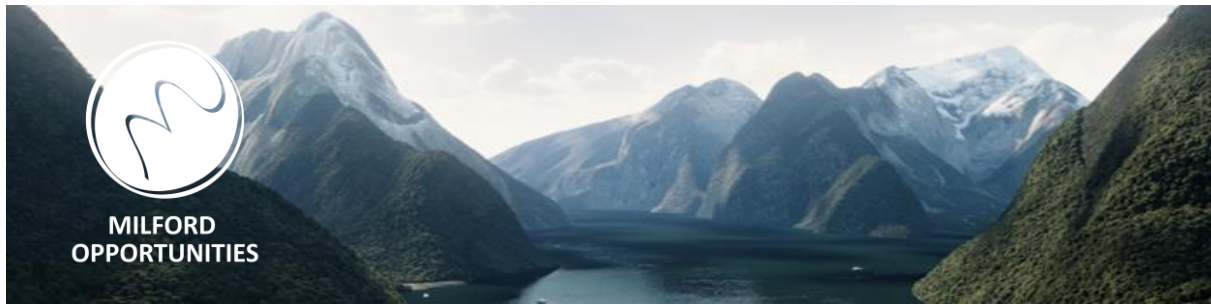
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concessions may also need to bring others into the area at short notice – mechanics etc. How would that work with permits? Are you suggesting, operational parking? Or another permit over and above a bus?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This group needs to be considered. The parking we are referring to is more about visitor parking. More people wanting to visit than you can safely provide for.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to be thinking about how that works. • Inbound tour operators buying all the parking spaces and working out how to deal with it later.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We already have demand management of conservation areas that are in high demand, the Wapiti blocks during the roar.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large part of what Milford Opportunities is about, not just about commercial stuff, infrastructure, how will that benefit the place, implemented in such a way that is in keeping with the place. • Similarly, it is about demand, finding that balance between making it open and accessible to people. What can the place accommodate? • We are really interested in thoughts about what you think about that approach in the first place. Whether you think there are some solutions there.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large piece of work was completed by DOC and Environment Southland. Whole piece (3 years' work). 25 user groups to commercial operators. Late 90's early 2000's.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car parking and bus parking. Has there been any thought on how people get around to the ferry terminal? What is the connect between those places?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing was arrived at as a particular solution. • The transport hub, how that linked into the visitor hub. • Earlier discussions talked about covered walkways and that didn't sit well with a lot of people. Hard infrastructure. • What is the right balance between good visitor experience vs keeping with the place.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The walk from the Milford Lodge to the terminal is a 30 min walk. Quite dangerous, vehicles come in huge groups.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am sitting in the 'team put a jacket on' as opposed to hard infrastructure to shelter people.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long is it all going to take?



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is getting dangerous. • I hear locals talking about 10 years.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will be feasibility testing, the energy solution, moving to low or zero carbon, if a park and ride stacks up. • Understanding what the capital costs of those options are. How long do they take to build. How quickly could it be implemented as part of feasibility testing. Certainly, something that we are thinking about, but no answers. • Putting finishing touches to scopes to ask those questions, that's why these conversations are so useful. • Business case goes up in June 2024.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential short-term measure. Regulation of rental industry as a short-term fix. Driver compulsory education for place, nationwide problem.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interest in resilient infrastructure to withstand natural hazards. Watching assets become more and more vulnerable how do we know some of this infrastructure is going to be safe. How vulnerable will it be.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The engineering contract is looking at locations, nodes, are they at a reasonable place to put infrastructure. • The masterplan got a tick from that perspective, next phase takes it into the finer detail, i.e., alluvial fan, what is the risk and mitigation for that infrastructure. Natural hazards are a key thing that needs to be considered in the context of feasibility testing. Hazard and risk, and resilience in what we are looking at.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and legislation workstream, looking at the pathways to some of the options. Differential charging for international visitors. The ability to control traffic on the roads, • These need to be found and then understanding the funding streams that could support that.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In relation to the Nodes – the proposed locations and proposed change points. Any thoughts? i.e., Knobs, Gertrude, Cascade, Lake Marian. • We received good feedback at the Tracks and Huts session, Mistake Creek not best location for what we were suggesting, and there was a suggested alternative option. Thoughts?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All good ideas, but they all come at a cost. All pie in a sky until FNPP gets resolved.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree that the nodes could spread people out.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many different types of travellers that go to Milford Sound and want to do walks along the way. We need to better cater to the wants of these guests by having walks/attractions of different lengths. • More options of longer and shorter tracks the better.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the project as a whole can't fund itself, then it is not likely to be feasible.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A park and ride to start at Knobs Flat would only serve to move the problem within the park. It is standard to look at putting any new infrastructure outside a national park where feasible.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to also test your thoughts re design concept of the infrastructure. Does that resonate as a principle?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The interpretation of it is very appealing, embrace it.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some thought needs to align with iwi management, building in potential management of areas like a rahui. Help with seasonal stuff. • A flexible management system, instead of a rigid system. More cultural and heritage shift. Look towards flexible cultural solutions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principles in the masterplan potentially leads to some significant change. If you need to move and shift, what are your thoughts about whether we should chip away slowly or try and get in there and make it faster. Slow burn? Or quick change?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put large infrastructure in place, businesses are more likely to go that way if there is infrastructure to support it. You are still going get a lot of people coming from Queenstown. Still going to happen. Keep thinking about that.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forty years ago, it was 50,000 a year compared to 400,000. 700,00 next year, 1 million the next. We knew it was a problem, so park and ride needs to happen as a priority.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solve the park and ride quick.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon is a slow burn, but it won't resolve the problem. • Sort the park and ride now. • Hybrid model going forward. Could be different in 15 years' time so needs to be flexible and adaptable.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus uses 90 litre of fuel and can take up to 50 people compared to a car using the same footprint with far less people.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A bus is about the same as 2 cars. • An 11-seater van is the same as a car
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you take rental cars off the road, 60 – 70 percent of problem is removed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting on with the stuff that people agree on. I remember the discussions in the late 90's. Operators need clarity, it is important. They need to know about timing. Keep consulting with us and operators. Solutions need to be flexible and future proofed – able to change with the times. Make flexibility a part of the mix.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get on with the things that we all agree on now.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match numbers of available parking spaces with access. Control is essential.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure needs to look natural.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrictions are already in place – example being the wapiti blocks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback provided post meeting: • <i>Only New Zealand licence holders should be allowed to travel on the Milford Road. This is something that could be done in a reasonable timeframe and would increase the quality of experience and safety of travellers to Milford.</i>

<p>Wrap Up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karakia • The strength of this team is increased by the strength of the people. What you bring here makes the work that we do much more valuable and much more robust. • Some of the themes we have heard is getting on with the things that everybody agrees on; clarity for operators around timing of when things will be implemented is important. • Feedback will be sent to participants to check for accuracy before publishing to website. We are transparent and want everyone interested to see what's been said and discussed. • We encourage you to sign up to the newsletter if you haven't already and follow us on Facebook so you can be kept informed. • The website, newsletter and social media are key to ensure that we are reaching and communicating with everyone. You can know what's happening in forums like these.

Themes

<p>Operators need clarity and timing.</p>



The only thing that looks natural is nature itself, the reason people visit the area. consolidate infrastructure and pare it back to sensitively integrate into the landscape.

Solutions need to be flexible and future proofed.

Get on with the stuff we all agree on, i.e. the park and ride now.

Too many vehicles travelling on the road was the main concern that needs to be addressed now, majority of problems are caused by rental cars and international drivers. Includes parking and dangerous driving. problems are caused by rental cars and international drivers. These issues include dangerous driving and parking issues.

Block / limit the access of international drivers on the Milford Road. Or block / limit access of rental vehicles on the Milford Road.