



# AT Local Evaluation: A Summary Report

The final report on the on-demand rideshare trial in Conifer Grove, Takaanini and Papakura town centre.

October 2023



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## Glossary

Customer Satisfaction	A measure that determines level of customer satisfaction. For AT Local this was measured through customer surveys and ratings through the AT Local app.
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	Indicators used to measure formal success of the trial.
On-demand	<p>A form of transport where vehicles adapt their routes, stops and timetables according to customers' needs, rather than using a fixed route or timetable.</p> <p>Differs from other "on-demand" products and services (e.g. entertainment services like Netflix) as it is not guaranteed that a vehicle will be available to pick up a customer as soon as they make a booking. A customer's wait time will depend on how many other people are also wanting to use the service at the same time, and their location in the Service Zone relative to the vehicles. If a customer wants to be picked up or dropped off at a specific time, they are advised to make their booking up to seven days in advance.</p>
Rapid Transit Network (RTN)	Train and busway public network services in Auckland.
Regional Public Transport Plan (RPTP)	Describes the public transport network that Auckland Transport proposes for the region and identifies the services that are integral to that network. It sets out the goals, policies, and actions that apply to those services and how they are run. <a href="http://www.AT.govt.nz/RPTP">www.AT.govt.nz/RPTP</a>
Rideshare	A form of transport where people travel in the same vehicle with other customers. Other customers may already be in the vehicle when someone is picked up, and other customers may be picked up and dropped off during someone's trip.
Service Zone	Area served by AT Local during the Takaanini-Papakura trial (13.5 square kilometres).



## Executive Summary

Auckland Transport (AT) started running its on-demand rideshare service, AT Local, in Conifer Grove, Takaanini and Papakura town centre as a one-year trial on 31 October 2021. This report documents AT’s experience and findings during the trial.

AT Local was trialled as a replacement for the 371 bus service, which was underperforming with low patronage and a high subsidy per passenger. Additionally, the AT Local Service Zone covered some areas not otherwise served by public transport, Conifer Grove in particular. AT Local could be used as a “first/final leg” connection with the train at Papakura and Takaanini stations or with the frequent 33 bus service on Great South Road. It could also be used for local trips within the Service Zone.

At the start of the trial, AT and Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency agreed on three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that would have to be met in order for AT Local to continue running in this area beyond the trial. All three KPIs were met and AT Local is now running in Conifer Grove, Takaanini and Papakura town centre as a continuous service, subject to the necessary funding being available.

### KPIs for AT Local trial

Metric	KPI	Calculation	Met
Patronage (Weekly Boardings)	Outperform ‘Do Minimum’ by 40% i.e., 600 - 1000 Weekly Boardings. (Exact target determined for each month based on seasonality and network trends/momentum)	Sum all boardings in a week (i.e., every tag-on count as 1, including children under 5)	Yes - since May 2022
Subsidy per Passenger	Lower or equal to current: Between \$37 (post-Covid estimate for 371) and \$22 (2019 i.e., pre-Covid estimate for 371)	(Total Operating Cost – Revenue)/Total Boardings (excluding SuperGold scheme payments)	Yes – since April 2022
Customer Satisfaction - Average Customer Rating	More than 70% of On-demand customers with ‘high/very high satisfaction’ score (8+ out of 10) based on On-Demand Satisfaction Survey	Based on the On-Demand Customer Satisfaction Survey	Yes- since July 2022

AT managed a number of issues and risks during the trial, including launching and running the trial during the COVID-19 pandemic, and suitability of the available vehicle fleet.

Community engagement at various stages was critical to the success of the trial, as was the willingness of Ritchies (the operator) and Liftango (the software provider) to work collaboratively with AT throughout the trial, identifying issues and trialling solutions.



AT continues to carry out an annual customer satisfaction survey, and where possible, makes improvements to the AT Local service as requested by customers. AT is working with the operator and software provider to make efficiency improvements and therefore serve more customers.

This trial shows there is customer demand for on-demand rideshare services in Auckland, and that these services can improve the existing public transport offering. AT will continue to trial and implement such services, as per our On-Demand and Shared Mobility Roadmap [www.AT.govt.nz/about-us/transport-plans-strategies/on-demand-and-shared-mobility-roadmap](http://www.AT.govt.nz/about-us/transport-plans-strategies/on-demand-and-shared-mobility-roadmap)

As a result of the successful trial, AT has decided to extend the service until at least 2025.



## 1. Introduction

In October 2021, Auckland Transport's (AT) AT Local service started running as a 12-month trial in Conifer Grove, Takaanini and Papakura town centre. This report explains why this area was selected for the trial; challenges and successes; and lessons learned from customer feedback and operational experience that will help inform future trials.

### 1.1 What is AT Local?

AT Local is AT's on-demand rideshare service. The service can be used to travel between any two points within the Service Zone. Customers must use the AT Local app or phone 0800 2 LOCAL to book their ride. They are then picked up by a professional driver in an AT Local-branded vehicle. There are almost 400 drop-off and pick-up points in the Service Zone, so customers only have a short walk (approximately 120 metres) from their origin to their pick-up point, and from their drop-off point to their destination.

AT Local is included in AT's integrated fare structure. AT's Journey Planner and AT Mobile tools suggest AT Local when it is an option for at least part of a customer's trip.

AT Local is a rideshare service. This means other customers may already be in the vehicle when someone is picked up, and other customers may join someone during their trip.

The on-demand feature of the service means it doesn't run to a timetable; customers can book to travel as soon as possible or up to seven days in advance.

More information about AT Local is on the AT website [www.AT.govt.nz/Local](http://www.AT.govt.nz/Local).

This report is about AT's second AT Local trial, which took place in Conifer Grove, Takaanini and Papakura town centre. AT's first AT Local trial took place on the Devonport Peninsula from late 2018 until early 2021. More information about the Devonport service and AT's decision to end that trial is on the AT website [www.AT.govt.nz/projects-roadworks/devonport-at-local-and-bus-service-changes](http://www.AT.govt.nz/projects-roadworks/devonport-at-local-and-bus-service-changes).

### 1.2 Why Conifer Grove, Takaanini and Papakura town centre

In 2020, AT developed its On-Demand and Shared Mobility Roadmap [www.AT.govt.nz/about-us/transport-plans-strategies/on-demand-and-shared-mobility-roadmap](http://www.AT.govt.nz/about-us/transport-plans-strategies/on-demand-and-shared-mobility-roadmap), which shortlisted the areas that could be served by AT Local. Additionally, an external consultancy, Via Mobility looked at the 14 bus services across Auckland with the highest per passenger subsidies, and whether they could be replaced with AT Local or another on-demand service. Conifer Grove, Takaanini and Papakura town centre was identified as one of the areas with the highest potential for on-demand rideshare services.



### 1.2.1 To replace the 371 bus service

The 371 bus service ran between Papakura Station, Cosgrave Rd, Porchester Rd and Takaanini Station. This was a traditional bus service with a fixed route and timetable. The 371 ran on weekdays only, from 5:30am until 8:45pm. Buses ran every 30 minutes at peak commuting times and every hour at other times. Approximately 6,000 people lived within 400 metres of a bus stop used by the 371.

The 371 service was not well used.

- The Regional Public Transport Plan target for this service was 7 to 17 boardings per service hour. This target was consistently missed.
- The per passenger subsidy for this service was relatively high. Before the pandemic the subsidy was estimated to be \$22 per passenger. After the pandemic-related restrictions had eased it was estimated that the subsidy would have been \$37 per passenger if the service had still been running.

### 1.2.2 Other reasons

- To bring public transport to areas not already served, such as Conifer Grove where approximately 6,400 people live.
- Park and Ride facilities at Takaanini and Papakura stations were full by 7.30am and customers were having difficulty accessing the Southern Line train service (part of Auckland's Rapid Transit Network).
- Compared with not making any changes to the public transport network in this area, introducing AT Local was expected to lower the per passenger subsidy, increase the number of people using public transport, and encourage more people to switch from the private car to public transport for more journeys.
- The Papakura Local Board Plan reported that continued reliance on bus as the main public transport mode in their area would likely result in stagnating patronage, ongoing high subsidy and compromised customer satisfaction.

## **1.3 Scenarios assessed to inform the trial design**

AT considered three possible scenarios before deciding to introduce AT Local and remove the 371 bus service.

### 1.3.1 Existing public transport services stay as they are

- AT wouldn't do anything to improve the 371, despite the service not meeting the community's transport needs for a long time, and AT's obligation to address poor performing services.
- Conifer Grove would not be served by public transport.
- It would cost approximately \$460,000 to continue running the 371. Two large buses would continue to be used to run the service. It was estimated that the per passenger subsidy would have continued to be approximately \$22, as this assessment was done prior to the pandemic.



### 1.3.2 Improve the 371 and introduce a new bus service

- AT would implement new bus stops on the 371 route along Walters Road and Cosgrave Road.
- AT would introduce a new bus service, the 264 to serve Conifer Grove as per the 2018 Regional Public Transport Plan. Two buses would be needed to run this service at peak times and the estimated cost of running the service was \$340,000 per year.
- Roads around Conifer Grove are narrow, and residents have said they would prefer large buses not use them.
- The total annual operating cost for this option was estimated at \$800,000. This excludes the cost of the new bus stops on the 371 and 264 routes.

### 1.3.3 Replace the 371 with AT Local

- AT Local would replace the underperforming 371.
- AT Local would serve a larger area than the 371, including Conifer Grove.
- AT would not have to use public resources to construct new bus stops.
- AT would not launch a new bus service in an area where the community is not in favour of large buses.
- The Papakura Local Board's preference was for AT to connect the Conifer Grove residents with Takaanini town centre, rather than Manurewa town centre.
- The estimated cost of running this service was around \$1,071,000 for a 12-month trial. This cost would include the operator, app licence, routing software and call centre.



## 2. How AT Local worked for the 12-month trial

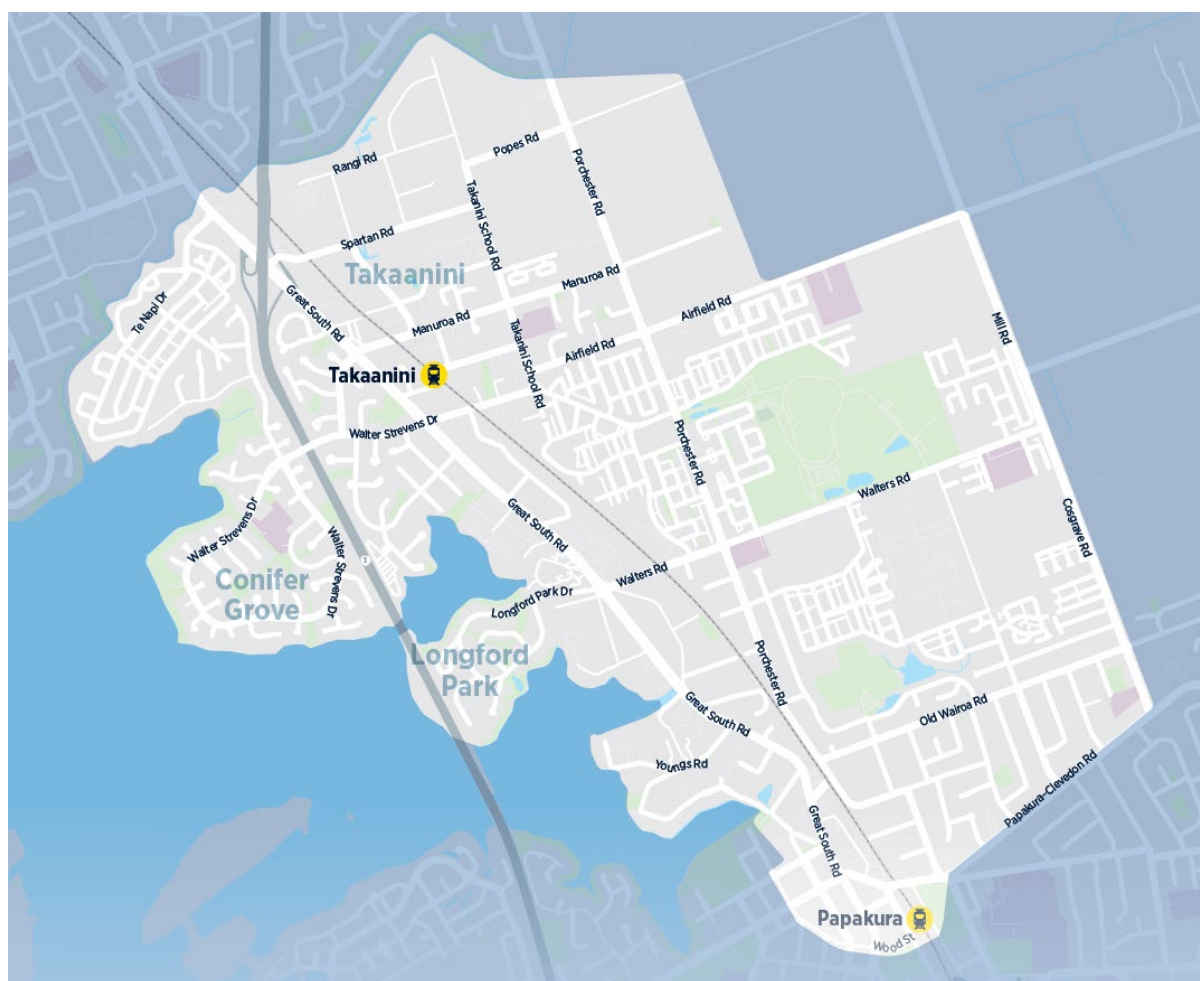
AT Local started running in Conifer Grove, Takaanini and Papakura town centre on 31 October 2021, when Auckland was at COVID-19 Alert Level 3.

AT contracted Ritchies (as the operator of the 371 bus service) to run AT Local, including the employment and training of drivers. Liftango was contracted to provide the app and routing software.

The AT Local Service Zone was 13.5km<sup>2</sup> and had a population of 23,300 people. There were nearly 400 pick-up and drop-off points within this Service Zone, so customers only had a short walk (approximately 120 metres) at the start and end of their trip.

Customers could not use AT Local to travel between Papakura and Takaanini stations – customers could use the Southern Line train service (or Rail Replacement Bus service) for these trips, for the same fare.

### AT Local Service Zone



AT Local ran seven days a week:

- 5.30am until 9.30pm on weekdays; and
- 6.30am until 8.30pm on weekends and public holidays.

The AT Local app allowed customers to send feedback and was available in several languages.

Once the pandemic-related restrictions eased, group bookings could be made for up to seven people.

## 2.1 Vehicles

AT Local was originally run using six 'AT Local' branded electric vehicles:

- Three electric LDV vans with seats for seven passengers; and
  - Three electric Hyundai IONIQ cars with seats for three passengers.
- These were the same vehicles used to run the first AT Local trial on the Devonport Peninsula from late 2018 until early 2021.

### AT Local' branded cars and vans used at the start of the trial



When the trial started Auckland was at COVID-19 Alert Level 3, so only the vans were used, with a maximum of three customers per van at any one time.

At Alert Level 1 and under the COVID-19 Protection Framework, it was typical for all six vehicles to be used at busy times, and fewer vehicles during quieter times and evenings. The maximum number of customers the vans could take at any one time was increased to seven.

The four-year-old electric vehicles experienced various mechanical and electrical failures during the trial, and there were long delays waiting for parts so repairs could be completed. Therefore, during the last six months of the trial it was necessary to use unbranded, petrol replacement cars without AT HOP card readers to keep the service running.

## 2.2 Wheelchair access

The three 'AT Local' branded electric vans used at the start of the trial each had a space for one wheelchair or mobility scooter and were equipped with an access ramp. Customers could report that they used a wheelchair when they made their booking, and the system would assign a van to their trip.



Once the service was operating however, the operator reported that the vans could not be safely accessed by customers with wheelchairs or other mobility aids. The ramp between the vehicle floor and the kerb was relatively steep, and there were no railings or any other form of support. Additionally, there was insufficient space inside the van for wheelchair-users to manoeuvre themselves into a safe location and position for travel. Folding wheelchairs could be accommodated provided the customer could manoeuvre themselves and their wheelchair into and out of the vehicle.

## 2.3 Fares

Customers paid their fare using their AT HOP card. All the 'AT Local' branded vehicles had AT HOP card readers. Customers would use these to scan their AT HOP card when they first got into the vehicle and again at the end of their trip.

AT Local was included in AT's Integrated Fares structure, and all of the AT Local Service Zone fell within the 'Manukau South' fare zone. So one trip on AT Local cost a one zone fare. At the start of the trial the peak-times adult AT HOP card fare for a one zone fare was \$2.20. This reduced to \$1.10 when the Central Government implemented their half price public transport fares initiative on 1 April 2022. AT's off-peak discount was available and all of AT's concessions were accepted.

### AT Local fares for the first five months of the trial

AT HOP fares for one ride on AT Local		
Children aged under 5 years	Must be with someone aged 18 years or older	FREE
Children aged 5 to 15 years*	Monday to Friday	\$1.15
	Weekends and public holidays	FREE
Secondary students*	7 days a week	\$1.15
Tertiary students*	7 days a week	\$1.70
Adults	7 days a week	\$2.20
SuperGold*	Weekdays before 9am	\$2.20
	All other times	FREE
Accessible*	7 days a week	\$1.15

**Save 10% by travelling on AT Local, buses, trains and some ferries:**

- On weekdays before 6am, between 9am and 3pm, and after 6.30pm
- On weekends and public holidays



For group bookings it was recommended, but not essential for each customer to pay their own fare using their own AT HOP card. If someone didn't have an AT HOP card, another person in their group could pay their fare for them, provided that person had enough credit on their AT HOP card. This extra fare would be at the higher 'cash' rate. There was no limit to the number of extra people a person could pay for, provided they had enough credit on their AT HOP card.

More information about AT HOP and AT's public transport fares is on the AT website [www.AT.govt.nz/Fares](http://www.AT.govt.nz/Fares).

More information about AT Local is on the AT website [www.AT.govt.nz/Local](http://www.AT.govt.nz/Local)



### 3. Launching the AT Local trial during COVID-19 Alert Level 3

When the AT Local trial first started on 31 October 2021, Auckland was at COVID-19 Alert Level 3, when there was a medium risk of community transmission with active, but managed, clusters.

The decision was made to proceed with the trial because AT Local was being trialled as a solution to a range of transport issues experienced by people living and working in this area. AT Local would therefore make it easier for people to access essential jobs and essential goods and services, including vaccination services, while the outbreak continued.

A range of specific practices and restrictions were in place to help keep customers safe when they used AT Local. These were updated as Government advice and restrictions changed.

At all Alert Levels:

- Everyone aged 12 years and over was required to wear a face covering unless they had an exemption
- There was a NZ COVID tracer app QR code for customers to scan in every vehicle
- Every AT Local trip must be booked so AT could contact customers if needed
- Vehicle interiors were cleaned once a day. High touch surfaces (e.g. door handles) were sanitised an additional one to two times per day
- Cleaning materials were available in the vehicles for customers to use

At Levels 2, 3 and 4:

- AT Local was run using three ten-seater vans only with a maximum of three customers plus one driver per van at any one time
- Hand sanitiser was provided

New Zealand transitioned to the COVID-19 Protection Framework on 3 December 2021. AT Local ran without any restrictions at all levels of the Framework, but face coverings were still required until September 2022.



## 4. Promoting AT Local

AT Local was promoted to the Conifer Grove, Takaanini and Papakura community in phases. This was a response to the pandemic and associated restrictions, and later, emerging information about who was and wasn't using the service.

This section is a summary of AT's key promotional activities. A variety of channels, both digital and hardcopy, were used to reach as many people as possible.

### 4.1 Trial launch

When the AT Local trial first started on 31 October 2021, Auckland was at COVID-19 Alert Level 3. Only the vans were used to run the service, with a maximum of three customers per van at any one time. As capacity of the service was limited, communication with the community regarding the service was limited to online channels and focused on telling the community what AT Local is and how they could use it.

From Friday 22 October 2021:

- AT published a media release.
- The AT Local page on the AT website [www.AT.govt.nz/Local](http://www.AT.govt.nz/Local) was updated.
- The AT Local App was available to download for free from Google Play and the Apple App Store
- AT implemented a social media campaign
- AT held two Online Q&A sessions, promoted through Facebook
- Posters were displayed at the bus stops used by the 371 bus service. Customers who used their registered AT HOP card on the 371 in the preceding three months received an email. AT Mobile users received a notification.
- AT Local was added to the Journey Planner [www.AT.govt.nz/JourneyPlanner](http://www.AT.govt.nz/JourneyPlanner) and AT Mobile app

Since the beginning of the trial, AT has maintained the inbox [rideshare@AT.govt.nz](mailto:rideshare@AT.govt.nz). Customers can provide comments and feedback about their experience to this mailbox, and they can also send feedback via the AT Local app.

### 4.2 More comprehensive communications campaign

New Zealand transitioned to the COVID-19 Protection Framework in early December 2021, and AT was therefore able to run the AT Local service at full capacity. AT implemented a comprehensive communications campaign to encourage people to use AT Local when travelling in the Service Zone and further afield. The campaign included:

- A brochure delivered to every household and PO Box in the Service Zone (approx. 84,000 copies).
- Banner and brochure displays at local libraries and Papakura Station.
- Posters and brochures delivered to AT HOP retailers, some local businesses, some community facilities, schools, churches, clubs, venues, medical centres, rest homes, retirement villages etc. in the Service Zone.



- Paid newspaper advertising.
- Online and social media advertising.
- AT Local-branded wayfinding signage at Papakura and Takaanini stations.
- A video introducing AT Local and how to use it [www.youtube.com/watch?v=KETqyz1cial](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KETqyz1cial) was promoted via social media and the AT website [www.AT.govt.nz/Local](https://www.AT.govt.nz/Local).

### Brochure cover



### 4.3 10,000<sup>th</sup> trip competition

By April 2022 (six months into the trial) customers had made nearly 10,000 AT Local trips. To celebrate this milestone and encourage further growth, AT ran a competition where the customer who booked the 10,000th AT Local trip received \$100 of AT HOP card credit.

The competition was promoted through an email to all registered AT Local customers, and AT Local app notification, a media release, an email to customers who'd used a registered AT HOP card at Papakura or Takaanini stations, and social media.

The 10,000th trip was completed in June 2022.

#### 4.4 SuperGold promotion

By June 2022 (eight months into the trial), AT HOP card analysis showed the service was being used by a disproportionately small number of SuperGold concession holders. This was despite the service being free for these customers after 9am on weekdays, and all day on weekends and public holidays.

An email was sent to SuperGold card concession holders who gave an address in the AT Local Service Zone when they registered their AT HOP card. The email highlighted the free fares, explained how AT Local worked, and invited them to two in-person public information sessions at Papakura and Takaanini libraries.

AT also held an in-person information session at Longford Park Retirement Village – the largest retirement village in the Service Zone.

#### Part of the email sent to SuperGold card concession holders







## 5. Evaluation

At the start of the trial, AT and Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) agreed on three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that would need to be met for the service to continue running beyond the trial.

### KPIs for AT Local trial

Metric	KPI	Calculation	Met
Patronage (Weekly Boardings)	Outperform 'Do Minimum' by 40% i.e., 600 - 1000 Weekly Boardings. (Exact target determined for each month based on seasonality and network trends/momentum)	Sum all boardings in a week (i.e., every tag-on count as 1, including children under 5)	Yes - since May 2022
Subsidy per Passenger	Lower or equal to current: Between \$37 (post-Covid estimate for 371) and \$22 (2019 i.e., pre-Covid estimate for 371)	(Total Operating Cost – Revenue)/Total Boardings (excluding SuperGold scheme payments)	Yes – since April 2022
Customer Satisfaction - Average Customer Rating	More than 70% of On-demand customers with 'high/very high satisfaction' score (8+ out of 10) based on On-Demand Satisfaction Survey	Based on the On-Demand Customer Satisfaction Survey	Yes - since July 2022

All three KPIs were met, so three months before the scheduled end of the trial the decision was made to run AT Local as a continuous service, subject to funding.

### 5.1 KPI1 – Patronage – how many customers used AT Local

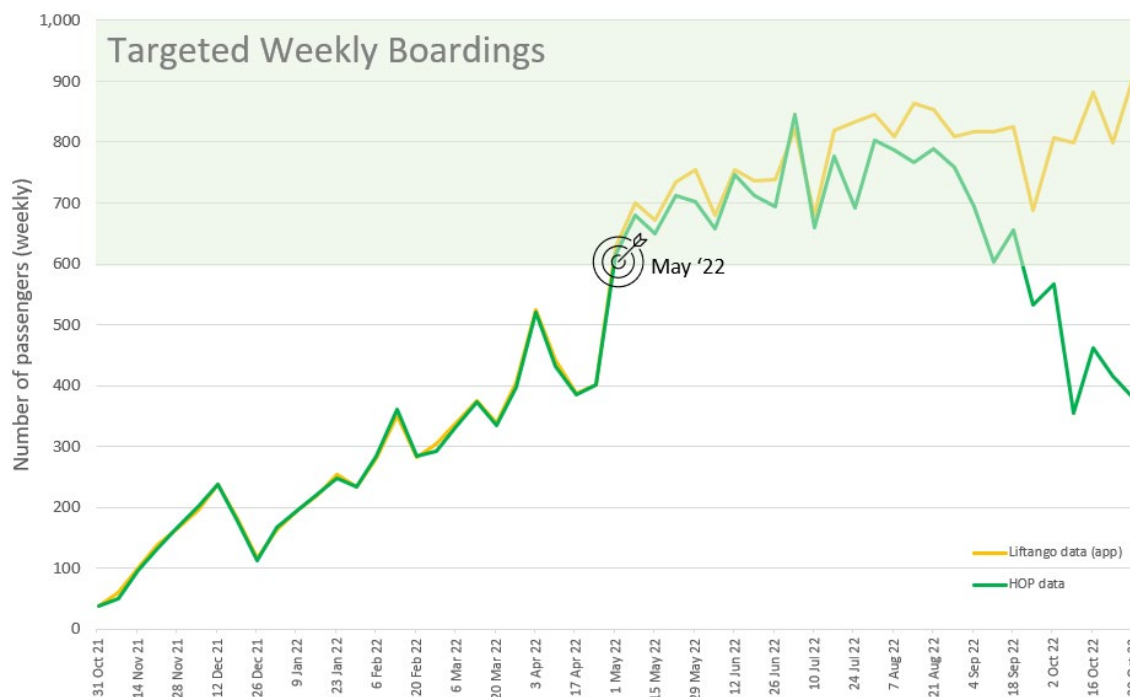
AT HOP was identified as the official source of patronage data at the beginning of the trial. However, the vehicles used at the start of the trial experienced mechanical and electrical failures and long waits for repairs, so replacement vehicles without AT HOP card readers were used for the last six months of the trial. Liftango data has therefore been used to report passenger numbers against the targets, as this more accurately represents the number of customers using the service.

By the end of the one-year trial, around 27,000 trips had been recorded. More people are now using AT Local than were using the 371 bus service it replaced.

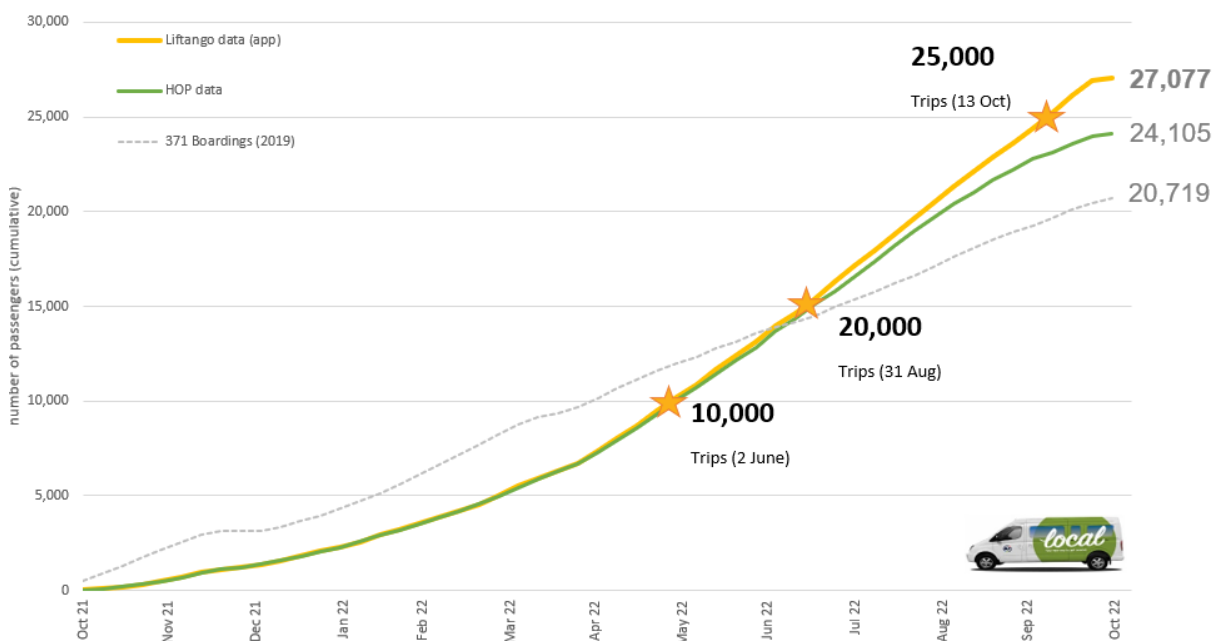
Key milestones were:

- Customers were regularly taking more than 600 trips per week from May 2022.
- By 3 July 2022, AT Local was exceeding its target patronage.

Daily passenger boardings shown against the target range of 600 to 1,000 trips per week



Patronage growth compared with targets and the bus service that AT Local replaced



**5.2 KPI2 – Subsidy per passenger**

The target range for the subsidy per trip was between \$22 (the estimated subsidy per trip for the 371 bus service in 2019, before the pandemic) and \$37 (the estimated



subsidy per trip for the 371 bus service in 2020, after the pandemic-related restrictions had eased).

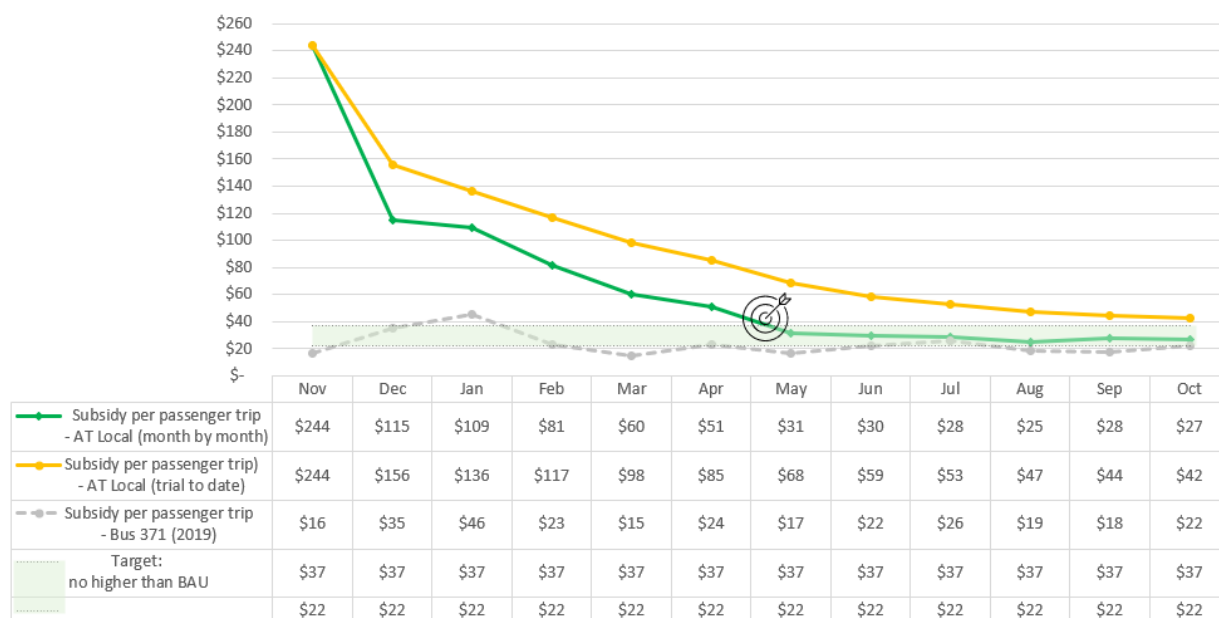
The subsidy was calculated as follows:

$(\text{Total Operating Cost} - \text{actual fare revenue}^1) / \text{Liftango passenger trip data}$ .

As previously stated, Liftango data was used as some of the vehicles used for the last six months of the trial didn't have AT HOP card readers. Liftango data has been used as this more accurately represents the number of customers using the service.

By April 2022, AT Local was consistently meeting this KPI. The service has subsequently continued to meet this target.

### Subsidy per passenger trip – month by month



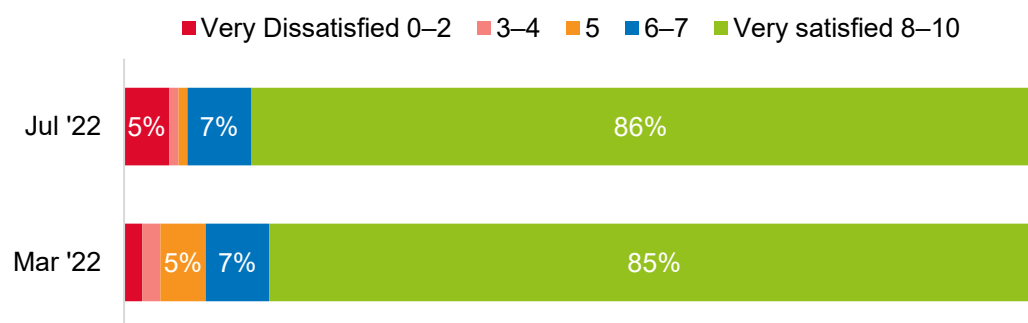
<sup>1</sup> This does not include the Waka Kotahi subsidy



### 5.3 KPI3 – Customer Satisfaction

The target for customer satisfaction required at least 70% of customers to give AT Local a rating of at least 8 out of 10. Customer satisfaction surveys were carried out by AT in March 2022 and July 2022. In March, 85% of customers rated their experience as at least 8 out of 10; in July this figure was 86%.

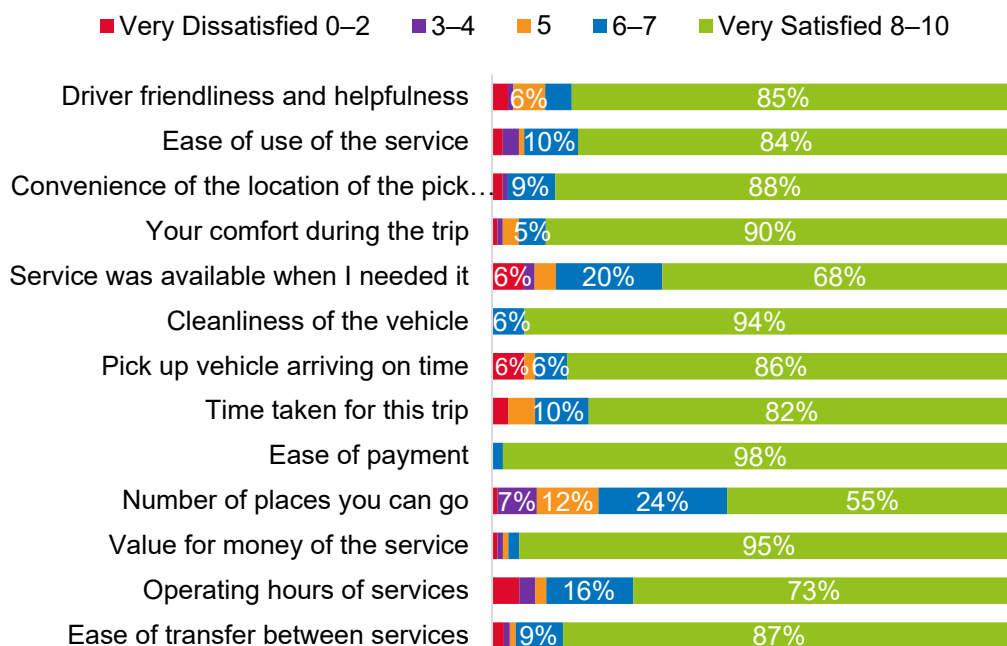
#### Overall satisfaction with customers’ most recent trip on AT Local



Customer comments included “The service is very fast, convenient, cheap and should be spread across all areas of Auckland.”

Customers were particularly satisfied with ease of payment, value for money and cleanliness of the vehicles.

#### Satisfaction with different aspects of customers’ most recent trip on AT Local, July 2022



In addition to taking part in the customer satisfaction surveys, customers could also give their feedback via the AT Local app. AT continue to actively monitor and respond to feedback and concerns collected through both channels.



In response to feedback about the “number of places you can go” AT is reviewing a number of customer requests to expand the Service Zone.

Service availability was partly affected by the vehicle issues previously detailed. AT is continually reviewing the market for electric vehicles that are suitable for AT Local.

#### **5.4 Other performance metrics**

Throughout the trial, AT had access to additional information that was monitored to identify potential improvements and to ensure customers were being offered a quality service. This information included, but was not limited to:

- Average pick-up ETA minutes – how long customers had to wait to be picked up.
- Average ride duration and distance – how long it took to complete each customer’s trip and how far they travelled.
- The number of AT Local customers with different types of AT HOP concessions
- Number of ‘new’ trips. E.g. trips that would not have been made if AT Local was not running.
- Percentage of shared rides – rides when someone is sharing at least part of their ride with at least one other customer.

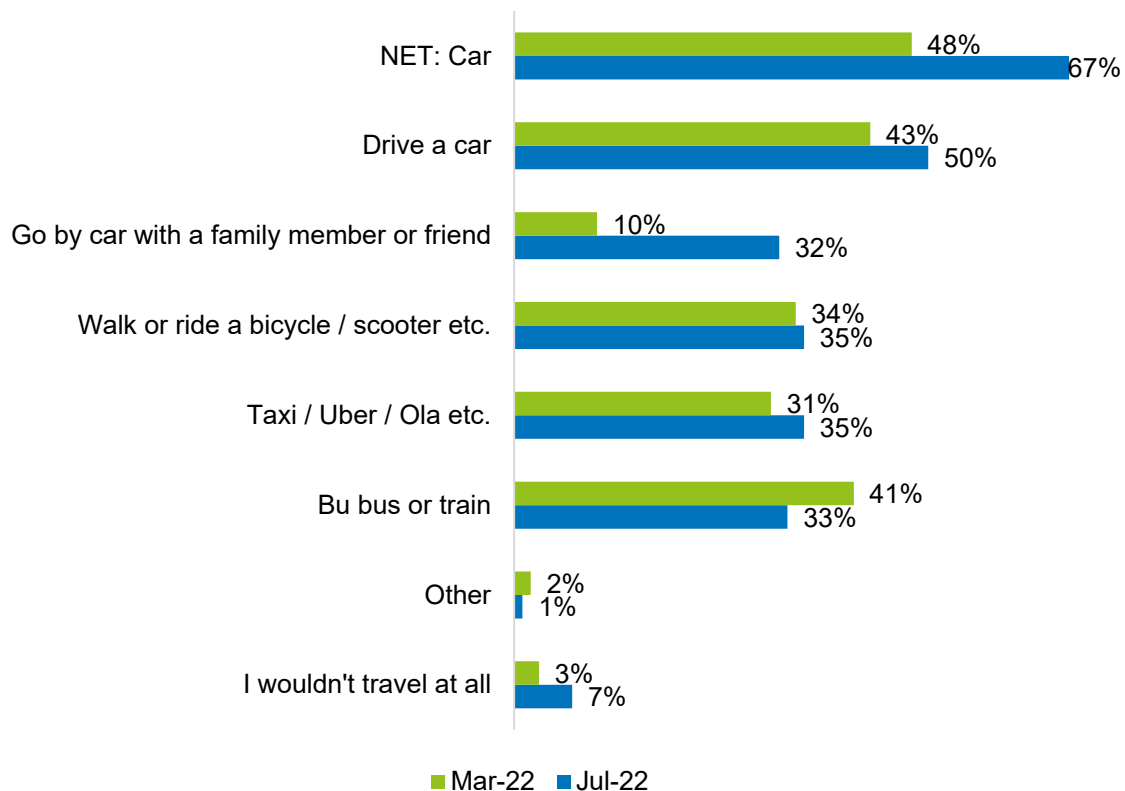
Other feedback was collected through evaluation surveys, community surveys, and feedback from elected members and stakeholders. Some excellent customer stories can be found in these data sets, such as “It’s so useful as a teenager who is not able to drive yet! I can go to the gym and temple on my own and as my mother is a single mother, she doesn’t have to drop me and my brother off to the train station and everyone is so nice and friendly to the both of us!”

The two customer satisfaction surveys (March and July 2022) revealed that customers would have made most of their AT Local trips by private car had the service not been available (48% in March and 67% in July).

Just over one in three customers said they would have walked or cycled if AT Local had not been available (34% in March and 35% in July). While AT Local was being trialled as an alternative to private car travel, it was not intended to be a replacement for sustainable, active modes like walking and cycling. This suggests there is potential to improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists in the AT Local Service Zone so that these remain attractive ways of travelling.



### How would you have travelled if AT Local did not exist / was not available?





## 6. Where were customers travelling to and from using AT Local?

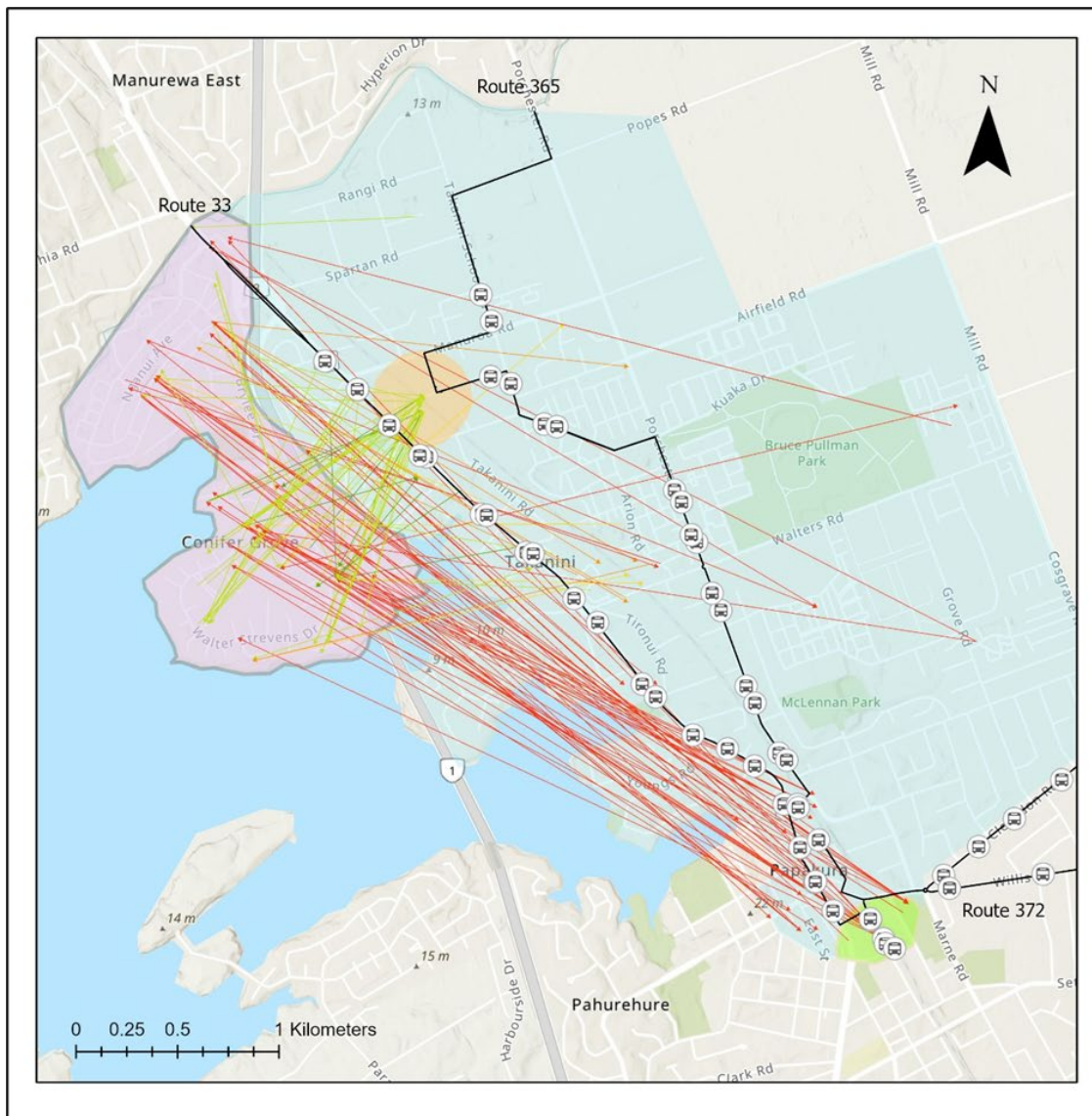
During the AT Local trial, AT and Liftango looked at where customers were travelling to and from on AT Local. The results were reported in two papers ([Kaufman and Hughes 2022](#) and [Pihera et al 2022](#)) and discussed at the 2022 T-Tech conference.

Prior to the AT Local trial, neither Conifer Grove nor Longford Park had a public transport service. Public transport use by people living within these suburbs was consequently very low.

An analysis of AT Local trips from these suburbs showed customers were using the service to travel to and from both Papakura and Takaanini stations (where they presumably transferred to the Southern Line train to continue their journey), and for local journeys just within the Service Zone e.g. to Papakura town centre.



Map of trips starting or ending in the suburbs served by AT Local that hadn't been served by the 371 bus service



Map of user behaviour in new catchment areas: Conifer Grove

Legend

- Bus Stops
- Bus Routes
- Takanini Station Zone
- Papakura Station Zone
- Conifer Grove catchment
- Papakura AT Local Zone

Distance from Origin to Destination

- 0 - 500 m (0)
- 500 - 1000 m (12)
- 1000 - 1500 m (215)
- 1500 - 2000 m (6)
- 2000 - 2500 m (8)
- 2500+ m (240)

Total count: 481

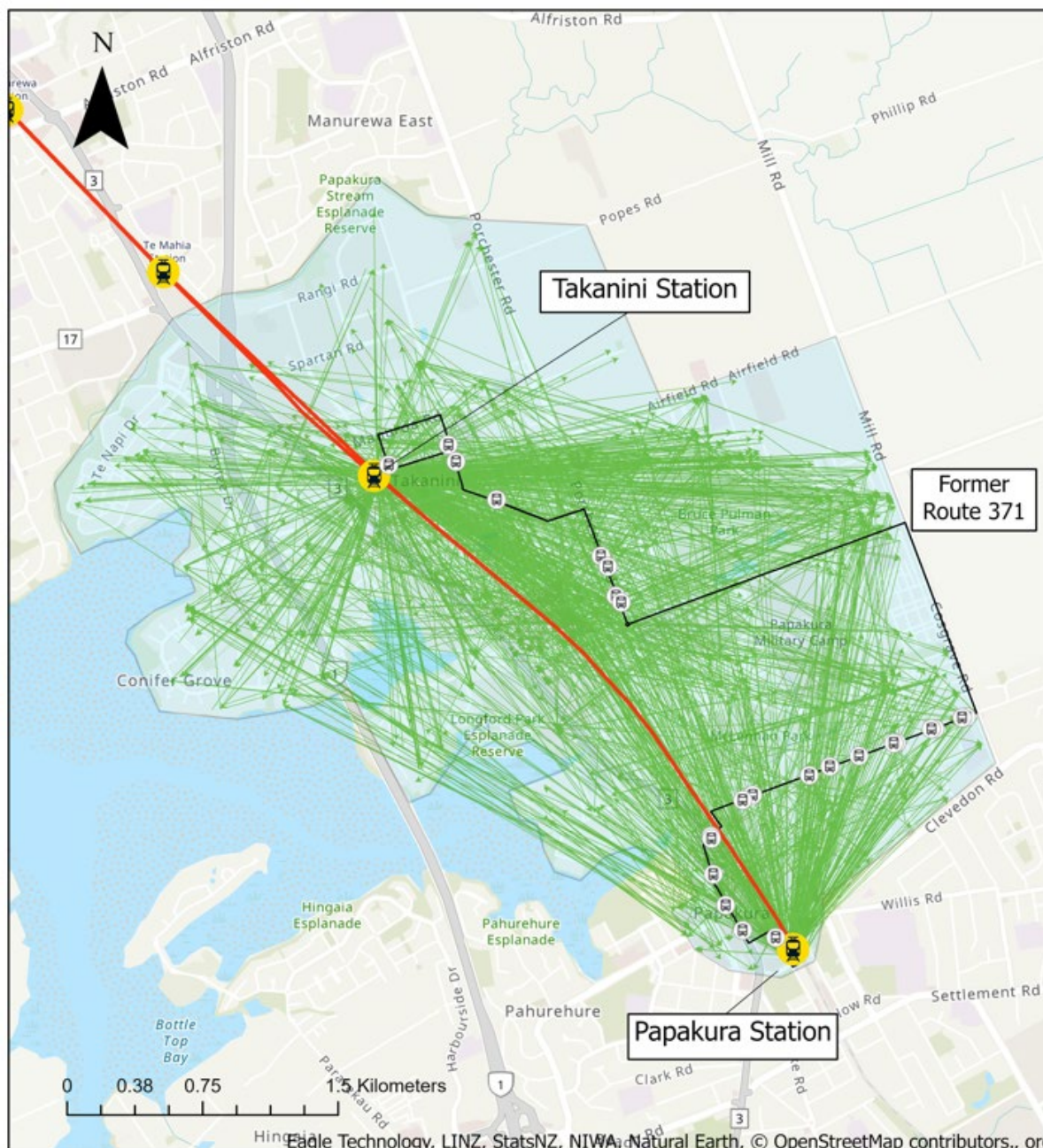
Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, LINZ, Stats NZ, Eagle Technology, Esri, HERE, Garmin, METI/NASA, USGS

An analysis of all the AT Local trips taken between mid-July to mid-August 2022 showed customers used the service to travel across the Service Zone as well as to



and from the train stations. This illustrates the flexibility of an on-demand rideshare service like AT Local compared with a fixed route bus.

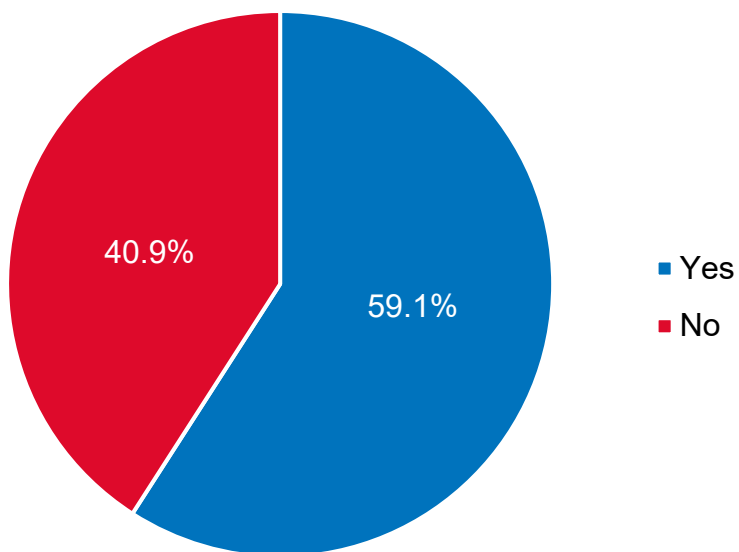
All AT Local trips taken from mid-July until mid-August 2022



According to AT HOP card data, nearly 60% of AT Local customers used the service in combination with an AT bus or train to complete their journey. This shows AT Local was being used to access Auckland’s Rapid Transit Network (i.e. as a “first and final leg” service).



Proportion of AT Local trips that transferred to or from an AT bus or train





## 7. Lessons learnt

### 7.1 What worked well

Community communications and engagement. AT was attempting to trial a new kind of public transport. Significant time and resource went into creating multiple communications resources that clearly explained what AT Local was and how to use it. Several on-line and in-person events provided customers with opportunities to ask questions and get assistance. This would not have been possible without an AT communications advisor being dedicated to the project.

Non-AT stakeholders, such as the Papakura Local Board, Papakura Ward Councillors and local libraries helped promote AT Local to communities that were previously poorly served by traditional public transport, and therefore untrusting of AT.

AT Local customers paid their fare using the AT HOP card. This was the same payment method as was used on the 371 bus service (the bus service AT Local replaced) and all of AT public transport services.

Ritchies (the operator) and Liftango (the software provider) worked collaboratively with AT throughout the trial, identifying issues and trialling solutions.

A beta-testing week (24 – 30 October 2021 when only AT-staff and a select handful of customers had access to the service) and launching AT Local during COVID-19 Alert Level 3 facilitated a soft launch. Teething issues were identified and resolved before a significant number of customers tried to use the service.

### 7.2 What didn't work so well

#### 7.2.1 The electric fleet was unreliable

The four-year-old electric cars and vans that were used at the start of the AT Local trial experienced various mechanical and electrical failures, and there were long delays awaiting parts for repair. Hence, during the last six months of the trial, it was necessary to use unbranded, petrol replacement cars to keep AT Local running.

This impacted the service in the following ways:

- Having fewer AT Local-branded vehicles on the road was a lost opportunity to promote the service.
- Capacity of the service was reduced – cars could accommodate three passengers, while the vans they were temporarily replacing had seats for seven passengers.
- The replacement cars did not have working AT HOP card readers for periods of time – during this time fare revenue was less and AT was reliant on Liftango for patronage data.



Suitable electric vehicles for an on-demand rideshare service are yet to be found and tested in service. AT will continue to attempt to source suitable electric vehicles for future AT Local trials.

### 7.2.2 AT Local was not fully accessible to customers with wheelchairs

Each of the three AT Local vans that were used at the start of the trial had a space for a wheelchair or mobility scooter, and were equipped with an access ramp. However, the ramps were removed due to safety concerns - the ramp between the vehicle floor and the kerb was relatively steep, and there were no railings or any other form of support. Additionally, there was insufficient space inside the vehicle for wheelchair-users to manoeuvre themselves into a safe location and position for travel.

Folding wheelchairs could be accommodated, provided the customer could manoeuvre their wheelchair and themselves into a safe location and position for travelling.

For future AT Local trials, consideration will need to be given to using vehicles that are fully wheelchair accessible.

### 7.2.3 Facilitating phone bookings was relatively expensive

In addition to the AT Local app, customers could also make their booking by phoning 0800 2 LOCAL. This connected them with an AT Contact Centre representative who could make the booking for the customer using the same platform as customers booking through the app.

Enabling phone bookings was costly and not well used, however it did make AT Local accessible to customers without a smartphone, tablet, or internet connection. For the Devonport AT Local trial (2018-2021), every trip had to be booked through the AT Local app. During the 2020 public consultation regarding the future of public transport on the Devonport Peninsula [www.AT.govt.nz/projects-roadworks/devonport-at-local-and-bus-service-changes](http://www.AT.govt.nz/projects-roadworks/devonport-at-local-and-bus-service-changes), customers cited this as a significant barrier preventing more people from using the service.



## 8. Next steps

At the start of the trial, AT and Waka Kotahi New Zealand Transport Agency (Waka Kotahi) agreed to three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that would need to be met for the service to continue running beyond the trial:

1. The target range for the subsidy per trip was between \$22 (the estimated subsidy per trip for the 371 bus service in 2019, before the pandemic) and \$37 (the estimated subsidy per trip for the 371 bus service in 2020, after the pandemic-related restrictions had eased). The monthly subsidy per trip for AT Local was consistently within this range from April 2022. (AT Local replaced the underperforming 371 bus service which used to connect Papakura Station, Cosgrave Rd, Porchester Rd and Takaanini Station.)
2. The target was for 600 to 1,000 AT Local passenger trips per week. Customers were regularly taking more than 600 trips per week from May 2022.
3. 70% of customers were expected to rate their overall satisfaction with AT Local as at least 8 out of 10. In July 2022, 102 AT Local customers took part in an online customer survey, and 86% of respondents scored AT Local this highly.

Waka Kotahi and AT acknowledge all the KPIs have been met, and confirm their support for the service. AT Local will be run as a continuous service, subject to the necessary funding continuing to be available until the existing Public Transport Operating Model contract expires in 2025.

AT will continue to work with Liftango and Ritchies to continuously review and improve AT Local, subject to the necessary funding and other resources being available. AT is continually working with Liftango to optimise the technology to increase the number of customers AT Local can serve.

AT is reviewing a number of customer requests to expand the Service Zone, add additional pick-up and drop-off points, and extend the operating hours.

AT Local was launched with three electric vans and three electric cars. Over the course of the trial the vans experienced various faults and have been retired from service. AT Local is currently being run using three electric cars and two diesel vans. AT is continually reviewing the market for electric vehicles that are suitable for AT Local.

AT will look for opportunities to trial new AT Local services in keeping with the On-Demand and Shared Mobility Roadmap [www.AT.govt.nz/about-us/transport-plans-strategies/on-demand-and-shared-mobility-roadmap](http://www.AT.govt.nz/about-us/transport-plans-strategies/on-demand-and-shared-mobility-roadmap), which outlines the principles for implementing on-demand services.

As a result of the successful trial, AT has decided to extend the service until at least 2025.





## 9. References and related documents

AT (2020). *On-demand and Shared Mobility Roadmap*. [https://at.govt.nz/media/1981832/j004697-on-demand-shared-mobility-roadmap\\_v7\\_compressed.pdf](https://at.govt.nz/media/1981832/j004697-on-demand-shared-mobility-roadmap_v7_compressed.pdf)

AT (2021). *EVALUATION PLAN- Papakura-Takaanini On-Demand Shared Mobility Trial*.

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Other relevant publications and related documents:

AT (August 2022). *AT Local's southern trial – a success*. <https://at.govt.nz/about-us/news-events/media-centre/2022-media-releases/at-local-s-southern-trial-a-success/>

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