



# Midtown Access Trial

## Pre-Trial Awareness Raising and Engagement Feedback Summary

### Report

12 March 2026



# Executive summary

**Pre-trial awareness raising and engagement** took place from **14 January to 28 February 2026**.

**252 pieces of feedback** were received overall. Feedback was coded into **494 smaller segments** by **theme and specific feedback type (concerns, suggestions, support statements)** and frequency was calculated.

The **most common feedback theme** was a **general expression of support** for the trial, or no issues identified.

- Business owners and operators spoken to along the affected streets were the most supportive group engaged with, followed by key stakeholders. Feedback from business owners mostly centred around loading zone changes on Elliott Street which were out of scope of the Midtown Access Trial. This feedback has been acknowledged, and a solution is being investigated.

A **subgroup of respondents** expressed concerns that the trial represented a **divergence from existing plans for the city centre**, with feedback centring around **pedestrian priority, access, safety, bus-lane operating hours, as well as zones for pick-up/drop-off (PUDO), Uber and mobility needs**.

- This feedback mostly came through from general public Q&A and email submissions, particularly from those living in the area. There were also calls for greater transparency and engagement opportunities.
- Some of the feedback was directed more at the overall city-centre direction, rather than for the trial specifically.

## Themes centred around:

- **support for the plan**, or no issues with it.
- **alternative solutions/preferences** – a more pedestrian-focused approach.
- **public transport & network design** – bus priority, safety, efficiency
- **loading, servicing and business access** – issues with loading hours and safety
- **pedestrian experience and safety** – safety risks and misalignment with CCMP
- **purpose, trust & transparency** – lack of consultation, mistrust, who benefits
- **evidence, impact & outcomes** – more expert evidence, including climate and business outcomes, and timing with CRL rollout
- **traffic circulation & navigation** – congestion, inefficiency, detours, need for clear rules and signage
- **engagement & participation** – clarify plan and details, allow more public input
- **city centre experience and social issues** – decline of city centre appeal



# Project Overview

## Trial changes in Midtown to keep our city moving

**Auckland's midtown is getting ready for City Rail Link (CRL).** To make sure buses run reliably, people can get to their destination safely, and support the soon-to-be busiest transport hub in New Zealand, we're trialling a set of **easy-to-understand access changes** in the Aotea / midtown area. These important adjustments aim to balance movement and access for residents, visitors and businesses while the city centre transitions to its CRL "day one" network.

## Trial mechanism – Reshaping Streets Land Transport Rule 2023 – Street Pilots

The legislation on **Street Pilots** enables councils to pilot, or make short-term changes to streets, to test different street layouts and features. This allows **communities to experience these changes in real time and provide feedback**. See: [Reshaping Streets | NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi](#)

## What's changing

•**Queen Street (Wakefield–Wellesley):** Bus Lane & Authorised Vehicles Only - including Total Mobility registered vehicles - **7am–7pm, 7 days**. After 7pm, all traffic can use this section to support the night-time economy and evening access. We're improving signage and signals so it's clear who can use the lane and when - on-street signage will refer to lanes as Goods Vehicles & Bus Lanes.

•**Wellesley Street (Elliott–Queen):** Bus lanes both sides **7am–7pm** for faster, more reliable buses; open to general traffic **7pm–7am**. Wellesley has upgraded bus shelters, wider footpaths and safer crossings, forming a custom-built corridor that will carry thousands daily and link directly to **Te Waihorotiu Station**. There is **no construction** required to introduce the lanes.

•**Access & servicing:** A new **mobility parking** space near Wellesley Street and **loading zone** times outside Acecco Supermarket and the Smith & Caughey Building aligned to keep servicing moving—**5 minute (Mon-Fri, 6am–6pm)** and **15 minute after 6pm and weekends**. Access to businesses, car parks and motorcycle parking on **Elliott Street** via Wellesley Street will continue. Mobility parking outside 290 Queen Street will be 30 minutes on both sides of the street.



# Alignment to guiding plans

## City Centre Master Plan – Outcome 2 Connected City Centre

A city centre that is well-connected to all of Tāmaki Makaurau / Auckland, to the rest of the country and the rest of the world for the movement of people and goods. Enables safe, healthy, and sustainable travel options to improve people’s access and choice of transport modes into and around the city centre.

## Access for Everyone outcomes

- Limit motorised through traffic
- Prioritise access to city centre destinations
- Improve access for servicing, freight and delivery
- Favour public transport, walking, and cycling
- Easier access for people with accessibility and mobility needs

## City Centre Bus Plan

- Faster, more reliable journeys for majority of bus trips into the city centre
- Key corridors can move many more people into and out of the city within the same space
- Easier transfers between bus, train and ferry services
- Improved air quality by removing congestion and moving buses through rather than to the city centre
- High quality bus stops on Wellesley Street and Customs Street will provide:
  - More space for better quality and consistent customer information
  - Excellent transfer facilities with Te Waihorotiu and Waitemātā (Britomart) stations and other bus to ferry and bus to rail transfers
  - The necessary space for future bus volumes.



# Engagement undertaken

**Dates:** Targeted engagement ran through January and February 2026, in line with [Reshaping Streets | NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi](#) requirements

## Feedback received:

- n= 252 pieces of feedback
- 404 segments of coded data (excluding 90 coded as 'no response')

## Who we engaged with:

### 1. Businesses

- 78 business owners and operators along Queen Street, Elliott Street, Albert Street, Mayoral Drive, Hobson Street, Wellesley Street, Wakefield Street, Darby Street, The Strand, MidCity, and SkyWorld were contacted.
- Engagement took place via face-to-face engagement, meetings, and emails.

### 2. Stakeholders

- Over 50 stakeholder groups, including: Business associations, resident groups, faith-based organisations, arts and culture destinations, Council groups, emergency services, Total Mobility service providers, road-user groups, food distributors, elected officials, parking, and accommodation suppliers were contacted.
- Engagement took place via meetings, emails, and memoranda.

### 3. Property owners

- 270 property owners contacted —127 on Wellesley Street and 143 on Queen Street
- Engagement took place via a letter inviting feedback

### 4. "Have Your Say" Q&A participants

- 26 questions were asked on the Have Your Say webpage [Midtown Access | Auckland Transport AT](#)
- This was made up of 21 unique contributors.

### 5. Emailed feedback

- 5 received during engagement
- 46 received post-engagement, and ongoing beyond this report.



# Method

## Data collection

- Feedback from stakeholder and business engagement meetings and other sources were summarised into feedback notes.
- Q&A comments were taken from the Have Your Say webpage.
- Emails relevant to the project were tagged and collected.

## Qualitative analysis

- Feedback was collated across the four engagement sources: Business, Stakeholders, Have Your Say (Q&A), and Email.
- All feedback was reviewed in full to identify key ideas, concerns, and suggestions.
- A coding framework was developed to categorise recurring themes across all engagement groups.
- Each piece of feedback was assigned one or more codes based on the themes it reflected. This split pieces of feedback into individually coded segments.
- Coded segments were then counted and grouped by frequency to understand the prevalence of each theme. 90 segments of data were excluded as "no response". In general, codes occurring less than 3 times were excluded from analysis.
- Results were summarised to show the most common themes and patterns across the engagement.



# Overall Feedback



# Overall feedback received – primary themes

Themes mentioned in **20 or more** pieces of feedback

Theme	Description	Frequency
Supportive Feedback	<b>Support: Support for the plan or trial</b> "No questions — just lots of support. Well done on a practical solution. Thank you" "Support changes. Pleased with mobility improvements, access improvements "	39
Supportive Feedback	<b>Support: No complaints / no issues raised</b> "No issues with changes"	29
		<b>68</b>
Street Access Preferences	<b>Concern: Opposition to more cars in Queen/Wellesley</b> "The emphasis... should be to make a people-friendly destination, not a road for through-traffic" "Get the cars off Queen St, and so NOT let more cars back onto it" "How will letting cars in the AVO area make Queen Street safer and more accessible?"	33
Public Transport & Network Design	<b>Concern: Bus lane hours &amp; priority settings</b> "Ensure bus lanes on Wellesley Street operate for extended hours (ideally 24/7) so public transport remains fast and reliable." "Implement 24/7 bus lanes on Wellesley Street to improve reliability and maximise the value of CRL"	26
Street Access Preferences	<b>Suggestion: Provide Loading Zones, PUDO, mobility access &amp; rideshare zones</b> "Develop comprehensive pick-up / drop-off (PUDO) and mobility-access plans that work for all" "Really upset that no arrangements are included for pick up/drop off e.g Uber eats, Door dash etc. Where will they go? Important for businesses and residents" "This proposal will impede efficient access to essential services and key destinations"	24
Street Access Preferences	<b>Suggestion: Fully pedestrianise Queen Street</b> "Keep pedestrianising Queen Street - extend the AVO to Customs Street, and keep it 24/7" "Why don't you just fully pedestrianise queen street?"	20

The most common feedback was general support for the plan/no issues with the trial. Another 14 expressed hope for positive outcomes from the trial (see next page), bringing supportive sentiments to n=82.

The next most common feedback centred around the experience for pedestrian, public transport and PUDO business users. Taken together, 53 pieces of feedback call for a pedestrianized, car free queen street



# Overall feedback received – secondary themes

Themes mentioned in **10 or more** pieces of feedback

Theme	Description	Frequency
Loading, Servicing & Business Access	<b>Concern: Loading hours do not match business needs</b> <i>“Regarding changes to the loading zone in Elliott Street, hours need to be for the full day as tradespeople often need to load and unload during the day to fix problems. Access needed for businesses isn’t limited to early morning as food deliveries happen throughout the day”</i>	16
Pedestrian Experience & Safety	<b>Concern: Misalignment with A4E/CCMP &amp; strategic direction</b> <i>“The proposal for queen Street is clearly against the CCMP that was cited on by Auckland Council and against the feedback provided by Aucklanders when consulted.”</i> <i>“This plan is oddly going backwards to what Auckland has been trying to achieve.”</i>	16
Purpose, Trust & Transparency	<b>Concern: Lack of consultation / advance notice / listening</b> <i>“The public hasn’t been provided with advance notice of this change. This lacks transparency and...should be put on hold until consultation has occurred.”</i> <i>“Why would you want to do this when the public do not want this?”</i>	16
Evidence, Impact & Outcomes	<b>Concern: Business/economic impacts &amp; compensation</b> <i>“Uber eats delivery &amp; pick ups - where will they park? Will they be fined/exempt?”</i> <i>“The proposal also fails to adequately account for economic impacts on local businesses. Reduced vehicle accessibility, increased congestion, and uncertainty around access will discourage visitation, complicate deliveries, and undermine commercial activity in the midtown area.”</i>	16
Pedestrian Experience & Safety	<b>Suggestion: Improve mobility access needs</b>	15
Supportive Feedback	<b>Support: Positive expected outcomes from the trial</b>	14
Pedestrian Experience & Safety	<b>Concern: Pedestrian safety risks</b>	13
Traffic Circulation & Navigation	<b>Concern: Congestion or bottlenecks created</b>	12
Traffic Circulation & Navigation	<b>Suggestion: Need clearer rules &amp; signage</b>	12
Purpose, Trust & Transparency	<b>Concern: Distrust in motivations, mandate or process</b>	10

The most common secondary themes centered around high level direction / engagement quality and impacts of loading zone and other changes on businesses and visitor experiences.

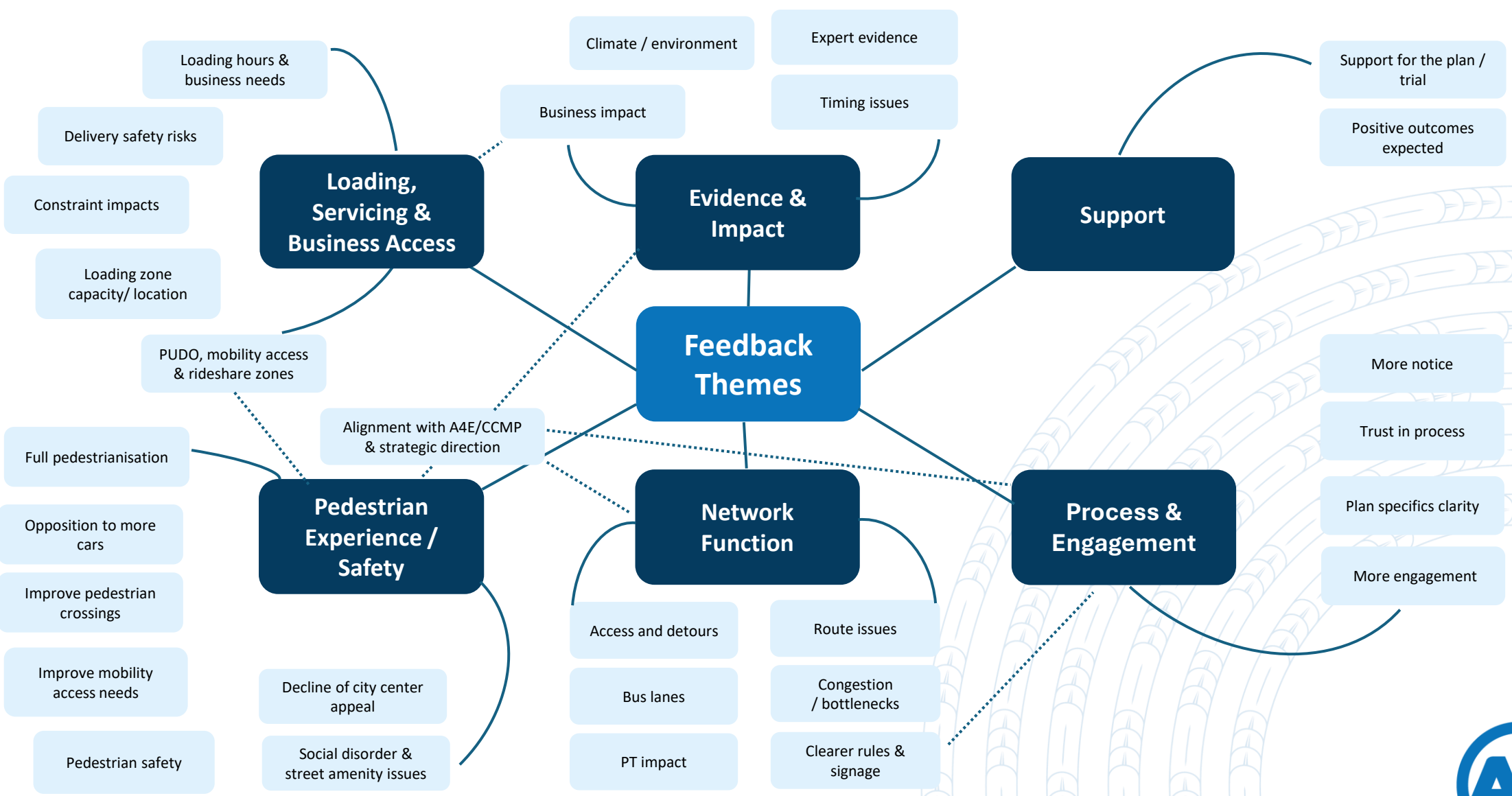


# Overall feedback received – minor themes

Themes mentioned in **less than 10** pieces of feedback. Themes emerging in less than 3 instances omitted.

Theme	Description	Frequency
Traffic Circulation & Navigation	<b>Concern: Loss of direct access / forced detours</b>	9
Evidence, Impact & Outcomes	<b>Suggestion: Provide evidence or expert justification</b>	9
Evidence, Impact & Outcomes	<b>Concern: Timing issues (premature / CRL sequencing)</b>	9
Engagement & Participation	<b>Suggestion: More public input opportunities needed</b>	8
Engagement & Participation	<b>Suggestion: Clarify plan specifics &amp; implementation details</b>	8
Loading, Servicing & Business Access	<b>Suggestion: Provide/adjust loading-zone locations &amp; capacity</b>	6
Public Transport & Network Design	<b>Concern: Turning movements &amp; intersection safety</b>	6
Public Transport & Network Design	<b>Concern: PT efficiency &amp; ridership impacts</b>	5
City Centre Experience & Social Issues	<b>Concern: Decline of city centre appeal</b>	5
City Centre Experience & Social Issues	<b>Concern: Social disorder &amp; street amenity issues</b>	5
Evidence, Impact & Outcomes	<b>Suggestion: Provide climate/environment impact information</b>	5
Traffic Circulation & Navigation	<b>Concern: Confusing or inefficient route options</b>	3
Loading, Servicing & Business Access	<b>Concern: Delivery safety risks</b>	3
Loading, Servicing & Business Access	<b>Concern: Illegal parking likely due to constraints</b>	3
Purpose, Trust & Transparency	<b>Concern: Questioning who benefits</b>	3





# Business Feedback



# Business Feedback

Most frequent feedback from businesses engaged with in the affected areas

Theme	Description	Frequency
<b>1. General Support For Plan</b>		
Supportive Feedback	Support: Support for the plan or trial	34
Supportive Feedback	Support: No complaints / no issues raised	27
Supportive Feedback	Support: Positive expected outcomes from the trial	9
		<b>70</b>
<b>2. Highest Frequency Feedback</b>		
Loading, Servicing & Business Access	Concern: Loading hours do not match business needs	6
Loading, Servicing & Business Access	Suggestion: Provide/adjust loading-zone locations & capacity	4
Traffic Circulation & Navigation	Suggestion: Need clearer rules & signage	4
<i>Traffic Circulation &amp; Navigation*</i>	<i>Concern: Loss of direct access / forced detours</i>	2
<i>Traffic Circulation &amp; Navigation*</i>	<i>Concern: Congestion or bottlenecks created</i>	2
<i>Evidence, Impact &amp; Outcomes*</i>	<i>Concern: Business/economic impacts &amp; compensation</i>	2
<i>Engagement &amp; Participation*</i>	<i>Suggestion: Clarify plan specifics and implementation details</i>	2
<i>Alternative Solutions &amp; Preferences*</i>	<i>Suggestion: Provide PUDO, mobility access &amp; rideshare zones</i>	2

## Summary:

Businesses were generally supportive of the overall plan, with many expressing satisfaction and no major issues raised. However, concerns focused on loading-zone hours, access to their shops throughout the day, and clearer communication about exactly when and how the new rules will take effect - and what impacts these may have on roads and businesses.

While LZ changes on Elliot Street were outside of the scope of this trial, a solution to LZ operating hours is being investigated in response to the feedback received.

*\*Responses < 3 omitted elsewhere in report but presented here due to the low number of stakeholder responses, to ensure representation of more views.*



# Stakeholder Feedback



# Stakeholder Feedback

Most frequent feedback from stakeholders engaged with

Theme	Description	Frequency
<b>1. General Support For Plan</b>		
Supportive Feedback	Support: Support for the plan or trial	4
Supportive Feedback	Support: No complaints / no issues raised	4
Supportive Feedback*	Support: Positive expected outcomes from the trial	2
		<b>10</b>
<b>2. Highest Frequency Feedback</b>		
<i>Traffic Circulation &amp; Navigation*</i>	<i>Suggestion: Need clearer rules &amp; signage</i>	2
<i>City Centre Experience &amp; Social Issues*</i>	<i>Concern: Social disorder &amp; street amenity issues</i>	2
<i>Street Access Preferences*</i>	<i>Suggestion: Provide PUDO, mobility access &amp; rideshare zones</i>	2
<i>Pedestrian Experience &amp; Safety*</i>	<i>Concern: Pedestrian safety risks</i>	2
<i>Pedestrian Experience &amp; Safety*</i>	<i>Concern: Misalignment with A4E/CCMP &amp; strategic direction</i>	2
<i>Evidence, Impact &amp; Outcomes*</i>	<i>Suggestion: Provide evidence or expert justification</i>	2
<i>Evidence, Impact &amp; Outcomes*</i>	<i>Suggestion: Provide climate impact information</i>	2
<i>Evidence, Impact &amp; Outcomes*</i>	<i>Concern: Business/economic impacts &amp; compensation</i>	2
<i>Engagement &amp; Participation*</i>	<i>Suggestion: More public input opportunities needed</i>	2
<i>Purpose, Trust &amp; Transparency*</i>	<i>Concern: Lack of consultation / advance notice / listening</i>	2
<i>Purpose, Trust &amp; Transparency*</i>	<i>Concern: Distrust in motivations, mandate or process</i>	2

## Summary:

Many stakeholders chose not to provide a response. Of those who did, the highest frequency of feedback indicated general support for the plan, with secondary themes around higher-level engagement processes, evidence and alignment, alongside specific concerns around rule clarity, pedestrian safety, PUDO and similar access, and social impacts.

\*Responses < 3 omitted elsewhere in report, but retained due to the low number of stakeholder responses, to ensure representation of more views.



# “Have Your Say” Feedback



# Have Your Say Feedback

Most frequent feedback from those submitting via the Have Your Say Q&A page

Theme	Description	Frequency
<b>1. Pedestrian city focus</b>		
Pedestrian Experience & Safety	Concern: Pedestrian safety risks	7
City Centre Experience & Social Issues	Concern: Decline of city centre appeal	3
Street Access Preferences	Concern: Opposition to more cars in Queen/Wellesley	3
Pedestrian Experience & Safety	Concern: Misalignment with A4E/CCMP & strategic direction	3
<b>2. Engagement and Evidence</b>		
Engagement & Participation	Suggestion: Clarify plan specifics & implementation details	5
Purpose, Trust & Transparency	Concern: Distrust in motivations, mandate or process	4
Evidence, Impact & Outcomes	Suggestion: Provide evidence or expert justification	3
Purpose, Trust & Transparency	Concern: Lack of consultation / advance notice / listening	3
<b>3. Road safety &amp; access</b>		
Traffic Circulation & Navigation	Suggestion: Need clearer rules & signage	3
Public Transport & Network Design	Concern: Bus lane hours & priority settings	3
Public Transport & Network Design	Concern: Turning movements & intersection safety	3

## Summary:

Have Your Say Respondents were most concerned about pedestrian experiences in these areas as well as expressing concerns around the strategic direction, engagement processes and evidence. Some respondents were also concerned with safety and rules in roading decisions.



# Email Feedback



# Email Feedback

Most frequent feedback from email respondents

Theme	Description	Frequency
<b>1. Pedestrian City Focus &amp; Accessibility</b>		
Street Access Preferences	Concern: Opposition to more cars in Queen/Wellesley	28
Street Access Preferences	Suggestion: Fully pedestrianise Queen Street	19
Pedestrian Experience & Safety	Suggestion: Improve mobility access needs	15
Street Access Preferences	Suggestion: Provide PUDO, mobility access & rideshare zones	14
Pedestrian Experience & Safety	Concern: Misalignment with A4E/CCMP & strategic direction	11
Pedestrian Experience & Safety	Concern: Pedestrian safety risks	4
<b>2. Road Safety &amp; Access</b>		
Public Transport & Network Design	Concern: Bus lane hours & priority settings	22
Traffic Circulation & Navigation	Concern: Loss of direct access / forced detours	5
Traffic Circulation & Navigation	Concern: Congestion or bottlenecks created	5
<b>3. Engagement and Evidence</b>		
Purpose, Trust & Transparency	Concern: Lack of consultation / advance notice / listening	10
Evidence, Impact & Outcomes	Concern: Timing issues (premature / CRL sequencing)	8
Evidence, Impact & Outcomes	Suggestion: Provide evidence or expert justification	4
Evidence, Impact & Outcomes	Suggestion: More public input opportunities needed	4
Evidence, Impact & Outcomes	Concern: Business/economic impacts & compensation	4

## Summary:

Email respondents were most concerned about pedestrian experiences and accessibility, road safety / decisions and around the strategic direction, engagement processes and evidence, alongside some economic impacts.

Note that only 5 email responses were received by consultation close date. An additional 46 emails since then have been included. Further emails since have not been included but will be responded to. Responses at frequency =3 omitted.



# Next steps



# Next steps

- The feedback provided was considered by the project teams and other stakeholders, with further information provided to email and Q&A queries.
- **6 March 2026:** The trial was endorsed by the **Traffic Control Committee (TCC)**.
- **By 21 March:** We will publicly notify Midtown Access changes, the trial purpose and timeframe, the streets the trial will operate on, and how to get involved.
- **Early April 2026:** New line marking, signs and traffic signal changes to be installed to coincide with completion of **Wellesley Street Bus Improvements — Stage 1 (Albert Street – Queen Street)**.
- **19 April 2026:** New Wellesley Street Bus Interchange complete, buses and passengers start using the newly completed infrastructure, access changes and the trial starts. The trial will last for up to two years.
- We will provide quarterly opportunities to feedback throughout the trial; the first opportunity will be in July 2026. As this is a trial, feedback will help inform any future changes. Find out more at [Midtown Access | Auckland Transport AT](#) and follow the project to be kept updated.
- We're setting up a new forum – the Midtown Advisory Group – to ensure a wide mix of people and organisations can be involved. This group will help shape the trial by sharing insights, providing feedback, and reviewing results. We welcome both individuals and groups to apply. Each quarter, we'll share the trial results with the Advisory Group for discussion and comment.

## Change is coming to Wellesley Street & Queen Street



**Find out more**

For more information, and to provide feedback during the trial, register for updates on our website.

