

Public feedback report

New North Road and Symonds Street upgrade

Phase 1 Engagement



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Summary

Auckland Transport has been actively engaging with the community of Auckland to better understand what concerns there are for people that live, work and commute along the New North Road corridor – between the suburb of Avondale and Symonds Street in Central Auckland. The key issues that have been gathered from community feedback so far in the Stage 1 Engagement include:

- Poor bus reliability
- Lack of separate cycle lanes
- Concerns of safety
- Quiet town centres

During Stage one of Engagement, between 25th January to 10th March 2021, Auckland Transport received a total of 2,005 comments from 1,293 individuals through an online survey, interactive map and hard copy feedback forms. This information will be used to assist in the design upgrades to the New North Road corridor.

Key themes in feedback

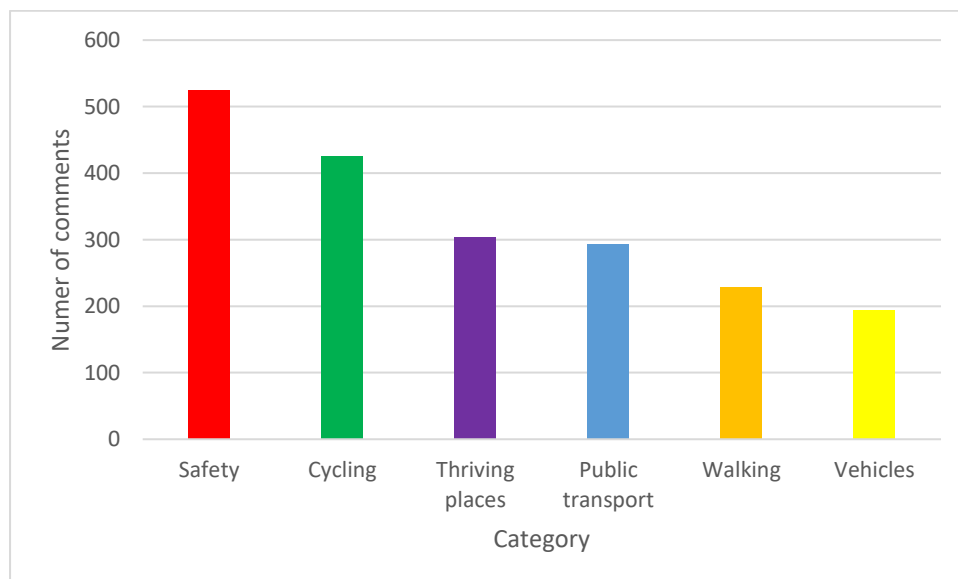


Figure 1 Number of comments received across the six categories of feedback

People were asked to provide feedback across six categories, as illustrated in Figure 1. The category with the greatest number of comments received was **Safety** (533 comments).

Within these categories there were key themes that were discussed in commentary. These are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 Themes that received the greatest number of comments

Theme	Number of comments
Recommendations to improve pedestrian and cyclist safety	362
Installation of cycling facilities such as bike racks	217
Pedestrian crossings at safety hotspots	214
Improving safety within thriving town centres	203
Increasing bus services and reliability	169

Next steps

To capture the community vision, values and aspirations, Auckland Transport is creating Community Collaboration Panels to help shape the future of New North Road. These collaboration panels will represent your community and we want you to be involved.

Details about the Community Collaboration Panel process will be made available on the Auckland Transport website.

Background

What are we seeking feedback on?

Auckland Transport is looking to improve safety, public transport, walking, cycling and other active modes of transport on New North Road, Symonds Street, (including Anzac Avenue), Morningside Drive, St Lukes Road (from Morningside Drive to New North Road) and Rosebank Road (from Blockhouse Bay Road to Avondale Road). The project area is illustrated in Figure 2.

New North Road provides connections to key locations, such as Universities, Eden Park, business and retail within the suburbs of Kingsland, Morningside, St Lukes, Mount Albert and Avondale.

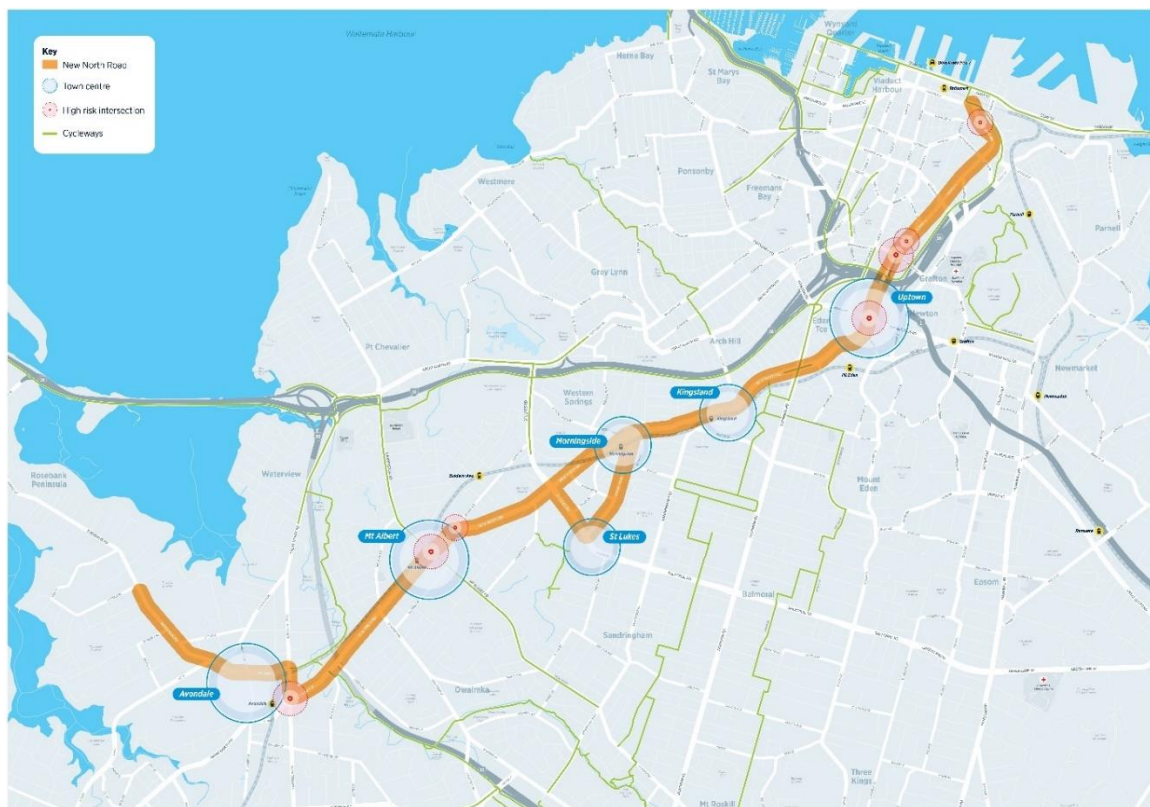


Figure 2 Map of the proposed New North Road and Symonds Street Upgrade project area

Auckland Transport would like to ensure that transport links in Auckland are fit for future generations, and support Auckland’s rapid population growth. The New North Road and Symonds Street route plays a key role in connecting the western and central Isthmus suburbs to Auckland’s City Centre.

New North Road forms part of the wider Auckland City bus network, enables access to the western rail line and provides a walking, cycling and vehicle connection over the motorway interchange to the City Centre and Learning Quarter.

What could the changes include?

Key objectives in the re-development of the New North Road corridor include:

1. **Safety improvements**

There were 48 deaths or serious injuries along the route from 2014-2018. 40% of the route is classified by Auckland Transport as 'high-risk', with seven high-risk intersections.

2. **Thriving town centres**

Local communities should be safe, easy to access and move around in. We want to make sure that the town centres of Avondale, Mount Albert, St Luke's, Morningside, Kingsland and Uptown provide good transport links between each other and with other developments planned in the future.

3. **Improved bus reliability**

This route has been identified as a key route where public transport can be improved. Buses need to be more reliable, and connect with other transport options in the future.

4. **Better cycling facilities**

Making it safer and easier for bikes to use this route and improve conditions to the rest of the cycleway network at Karangahape Road, Beach Road, Grafton Gully and the North-Western Cycleway.

Over the coming years significant population growth along the corridor will increase public demand for safe and efficient transport. As these upgrades are planned for future years, the objective of engagement is to work with local communities to find suitable solutions now, to create better spaces in the future. The upgrades will need to integrate with future developments and projects such as the completion of the City Rail Link, Urban Cycleway Programme, Auckland Transport 10 Year Programme, housing developments along the corridor, and events such as the Women's Football World Cup in 2023.

This report provides insight into the findings from the first engagement phase carried out through both mail in and online surveys, and an online interactive map.

Consultation

Consultation during this initial phase was from 25th January to 10th March 2021.

What we asked you

The interactive map enabled community members to drop a 'pin' corresponding to the category they wanted to provide feedback on. The map also allowed community members to review other comments and respond with a thumbs up or down.

The survey questions are listed below. The words underlined reflect the categories that were used on the interactive map to ensure alignment between the two engagement tools.

1. What safety improvements do you think we need?
2. How can we improve bus travel times?
3. How can we improve town centres along the route? If possible, be specific to which town centre you want to give feedback about.
4. How can we improve walking and cycling connections?
5. Are there any other comments you would like to make regarding improvements to New North Road?

Engagement tools

Engagement tools included:

- Interactive map – stakeholders were encouraged to provide feedback using an interactive map that allowed for location-specific comments.
- Survey – stakeholders were encouraged to provide in-depth feedback using a survey that could be completed online or in hard copy. This survey asked questions around specific themes of safety, public transport, thriving places, walking and cycling.
- Email and written submissions were encouraged, these were received through the Auckland Transport website and relevant administration channels.
- Meetings with Stakeholders and the Local Boards.

Communication materials

The consultation process was advertised through a range of communication materials to raise awareness of the project and ensure that a broad community demographic was informed about their opportunity to participate in the engagement process.

Communication materials included: AT website, posters, information brochures, postcards, social media, and correspondence via email and letters.

Community Engagement events

To promote the community engagement activities, the Auckland Transport project team attended various events within the project area. Some of these were existing events, while others were those organised specifically for the project. Table 2 provides an overview of the engagement events that were attended by the project team.

Table 2 Overview of community engagement events

Engagement Event	Event Description	Stakeholders	Date
Business drop-ins	Project team dropping into businesses with brochures and postcards to inform them of the project.	Mount Albert businesses	3rd February 2021
		Mount Albert businesses	4th February 2021
Commuter sessions	Project team speaking with commuters at key transport links during peak hour.	Segment 1	9th February 2021
			10th February 2021
Community engagement events	Drop-in events where the community could give feedback to the project team and clarify questions.	Virtual community drop-in session	16/17th February 2021
		Community members at Mount Albert War Memorial Hall	25th February 2021
		Community at St Lukes Anglican Church	27th February 2021
University events	Stalls at O-Week events to inform students of the project and receive feedback from those travelling along the corridor.	AUT students	25th and 26th February 2021
		University of Auckland students	22nd March 2021

Your feedback

Overview

Overall, 1293 respondents engaged with the New North Road and Symonds Street Upgrade consultation. This included:

- 215 survey responses
- 1066 responses from the interactive map
- 5 email and written responses
- 7 key stakeholder meetings

A total of 2005 comments were received from community members via the interactive map, surveys and emailed responses.

Who did we hear from?

Demographic data of respondents was only collected through the survey. Of the 215 survey responses, there were slightly more male respondents (110) to female (80). The remainder responded as other, no response, or prefer not to say.

Age groups of the respondents was also collected. Figure 3 illustrates that ages 35-44 having the highest response rate.

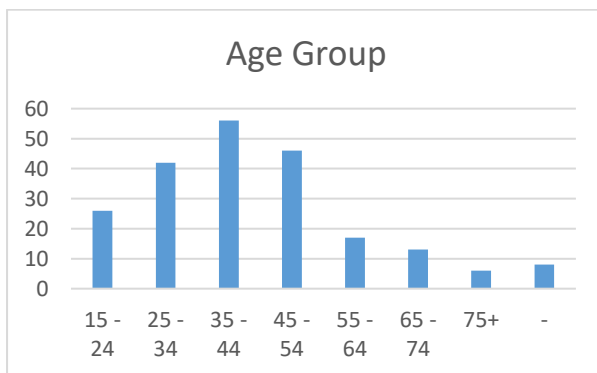


Figure 3: Age group of respondents

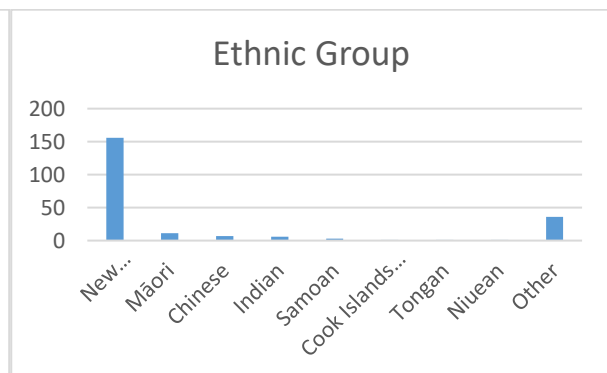


Figure 4: Ethnic representation of respondents

Ethnicity of the respondents was also collected. Respondents were able to select more than one ethnicity – of the options provided, 35 respondents identified with an ethnicity that was not covered.

Safety

Safety was the category with the largest number of comments (533 comments). In looking at the geographical distribution of these comments, as seen in Figure 5 the majority were received toward the east of the corridor, with a hot spot identified around Mount Eden.

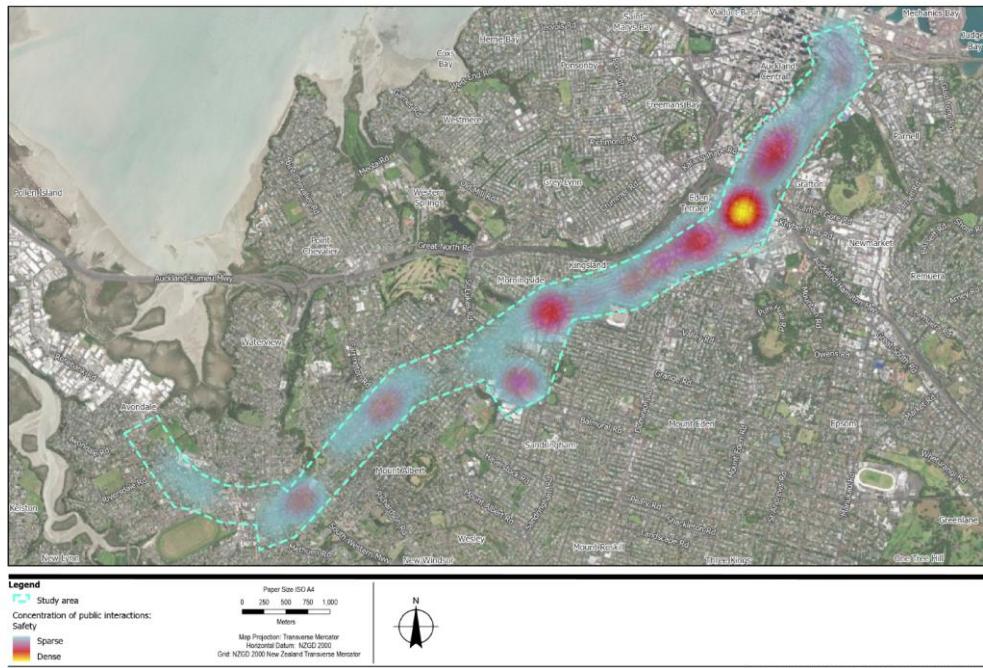


Figure 5 Heat map distribution of comments regarding safety along the corridor

Key themes that emerged within this category included:

1. Changes to road layout

Feedback included recommendations for changes in road layout and intersections, improvements to the road surface, removal of slip lanes and the increased placement of signage for drivers.

2. Parking/traffic

Public concerns regarding the impact on safety and traffic flows and the reduction/removal of on-street parking emerged.

3. Pedestrian/cyclist safety

Feedback related to the need for improved pedestrian and cyclist safety through the installation of safer pedestrian crossings and cycle lanes. Comments also reflect the need for speed limit reductions along the corridor.

Most liked comments on the interactive map

“Many people cross the road here, usually getting off the bus and going to the homes or businesses in Eden Terrace. It’s a dangerous place to cross with many cars turning into the sideroads, and solid traffic at rush hour. Often people wait on the flush median to get across. There is no close pedestrian crossing. Pedestrian safety should be a priority to encourage

bus use, and to connect the neighbourhoods of Eden Terrace to Mt Eden.” 👍 (24) [334 New North Road]

“Close the motorway onramp. It makes the K Road intersection really dangerous for walking and cycling and blocks south bound buses.” 👍 (16) [SH1 Symonds Street intersection]

“There is too much focus on general traffic here. Should be one lane only for general traffic and one bus lane in both directions. Use the extra space for physically protected cycle lanes.” (14) 👍 [Symonds Street between Grafton Bridge and Alex Evans Street]

“Anzac Avenue is way too wide, and this is dangerous and difficult to cross” 👍 (14) [129 Anzac Avenue]

“This area is dangerous for pedestrians walking west as it involves high speed traffic entering the dominion road slipway. Ideally the flyover should be removed entirely.” (14) 👍 [Porters Avenue and New North Road intersection]

Cycling

Cycling received 433 comments. In looking at the geographical distribution of comments, as identified in Figure 6, it is evident that a large proportion of comments were located in the Symonds Street, Uptown area. The feedback received in these locations included suggestions of areas to improve cycling infrastructure and recommendations to increase the level of facility provision.

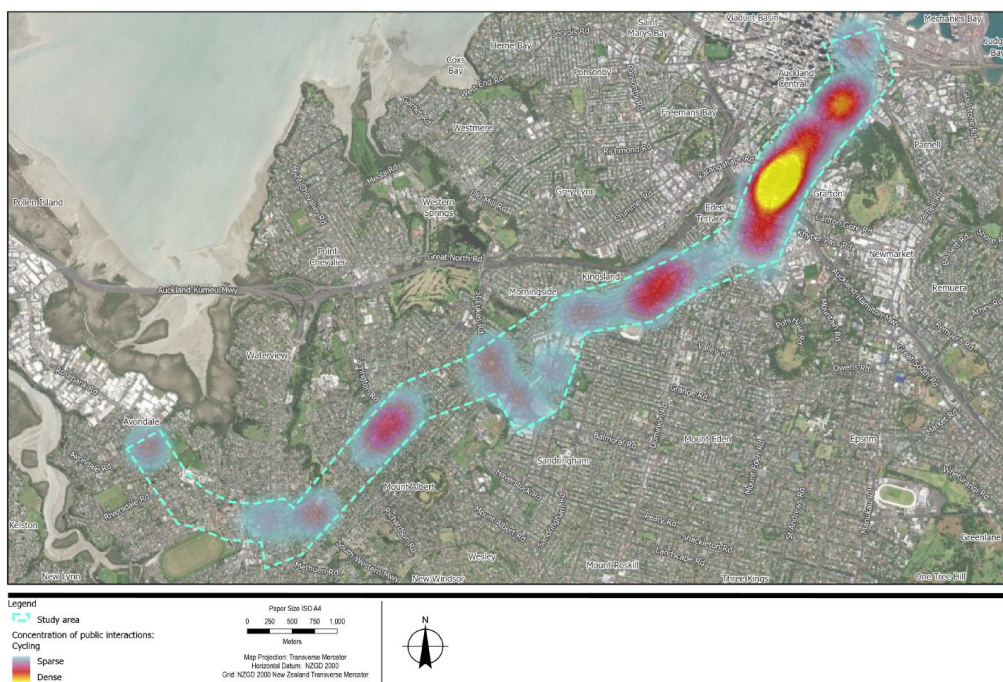


Figure 6 Heat map of comments along the corridor relating to cycling

Summary of key cycling themes

Key themes developed from the feedback gathered were in relation to the lack of cycleways within the corridor. Other comments identified the need for cycling facilities (for example;

cycle locks and parks).

1. Connectivity

There were comments relating to the need for an integrated cycle network, connecting up to the existing north western cycleway and the inner city pink bridge.


2. Cycling facilities


The physical facilities that should be incorporated, mainly parking. Numerous comments requested protected and separated cycleways, improvements in existing facilities and traffic lights triggered by cyclists.


3. Safety concerns and improvements


These comments provided feedback on the existing environment for cyclists within this corridor (mainly at intersections), the road traffic speed, lack of protection and the lack of facilities currently in place for cyclists.


Most liked comments on the interactive map

“Symonds St from the bridge to K’Rd is SUPER wide, at least 6 lanes at any point - can we please repurpose one of these lanes into a proper, protected, bi-directional cycleway to connect up with K’Rd and Grafton Bridge?”  (28)

“Symonds street cycleways are a huge missing link in Auckland’s cycle network. The city has potential to increase bike mode share practically, in a big way, by providing safe, separated bicycle lanes to over 60 thousand commuters. Young people that aren’t set in their ways and will be willing to try the new cycling network. Remove one lane of general traffic if you have to, so we can have a proper bi-directional cycleway the everyone will feel safe using.”  (26)

“Add protected cycle lanes to the length of new north road. While the NW cycle path is close, it is at the bottom of a steep gully, and isn’t useful for local trips, particularly around/between Mountt Albert, st Lukes, Kingsland, Uptown etc.”  (25)

“Would be good if there was a connection to the cycle path below.”  (23) [Symonds Street between Alex Evans Street and Karangahape Road to Grafton Gully Cycleway]

“Symonds St needs protected cycle lanes that connect up to the new ones on K Rd.”  (22) [Intersection of Karangahape Road and Symonds Street]

Thriving Places

Auckland Transport would like to ensure that the town centres of the Learning Quarter, Uptown, Kingsland, Morningside, Mount Albert, and Avondale have provision for good transport links between them, and with other developments planned in the future.

Comments in relation to ‘thriving places’ have been analysed by town centre.

The Learning Quarter and Uptown received the highest number of comments across all of the town centres as illustrated in Figure 7. The categories of comments received by the community changed along the corridor, reflecting the changes in transport modes within each section. For example, in the Learning Quarter there were a large number of comments relating to cycling, while the number of comments relating to vehicles was higher in the town centre of Mount Albert.

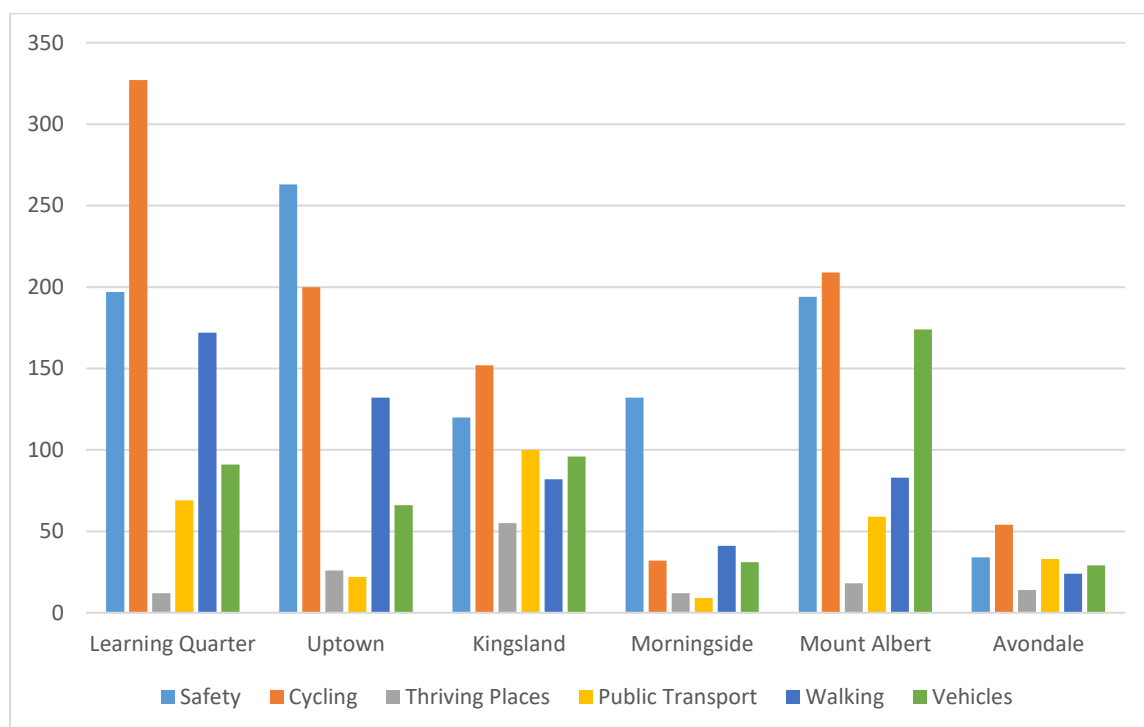


Figure 7 Number of comments by town centre and category

Key themes by town centre

Learning Quarter

This area has the highest number of interactions out of all the identified town centres, with 868 interactions recorded on the interactive map alone. Within the survey, 14 people made comments contributing their thoughts on what they think would make the Learning Quarter a thriving place. Below are the main themes:

- Space activation
- Pedestrian focus of Symonds Street
- Vehicle traffic demonstrating an unfriendly outdoor environment

Uptown

A large focus of comments for Uptown drew on safety considerations, with a total of 709 interactions. Within survey responses, 13 responses related to Uptown. The following themes emerged as requirements to make Uptown a thriving place:

- 1. Underutilisation of land use**

At the junction of Symonds Street and Mount Eden Road.

- 2. Safety issues**

For cyclists and pedestrians.

Kingsland

There were a total of 605 interactions within the Kingsland town centre. The survey resulted in 31 responses regarding Kingsland. The following themes emerged as to how Kingsland could flourish further:

- 1. Amenity improvement**

To provide a more pedestrian oriented environment

- 2. Traffic calming measures**

To reduce speed and rat running surrounding the main New North Road portion of the town centre.

Morningside

Feedback gathered regarding Morningside includes 257 interactions on the interactive map and 15 responses via the survey. Themes on how Morningside could be improved to create a more thriving place were:

- 1. Pedestrian crossings in demand**

To increase safety and accessibility in the Morningside town centre

- 2. Safety concerns raised**

Regarding lack of crime prevention and passive surveillance within the Morningside town centre

- 3. Parking concerns**

Surrounding the Morningside train station in relation to commuter parking.

Mount Albert

Within the Mount Albert town centre, the majority of feedback received from the community (737 interactions) relates to the town centre upgrades that were undertaken in 2016. This is reflected in the 44 survey responses. Below is a summary of the key themes regarding the Mount Albert town centre.

- 1. Traffic congestion**

Concerns raised in relation to the traffic congestion issues. It has been identified that enforcement and operation of the current road layout is not adequate in the required use.

- 2. Prioritising use of public transport**

To connect Mount Albert to the city and other suburbs.

- 3. Visitors**

Revitalisation and repurposing of public spaces has been identified as an option for

creating a more inviting space, as well as supporting more integrated connectivity between bus stops and the train station.

Avondale

Avondale had the lowest level of engagement with 3 responses via the survey and 188 interactions on the map. Safety improvements were a dominant theme for Avondale to become a thriving place. These are as follows:

1. Amenity improvements

To create a more vibrant town centre in Avondale.

2. Safety improvements

On major arterial intersections

Public Transport

Public Transport received 304 comments from the community. The geographical spread of comments as illustrated in Figure 8 were concentrated through Uptown and Kingsland, with secondary locations in the Learning Quarter and Mount Albert area.

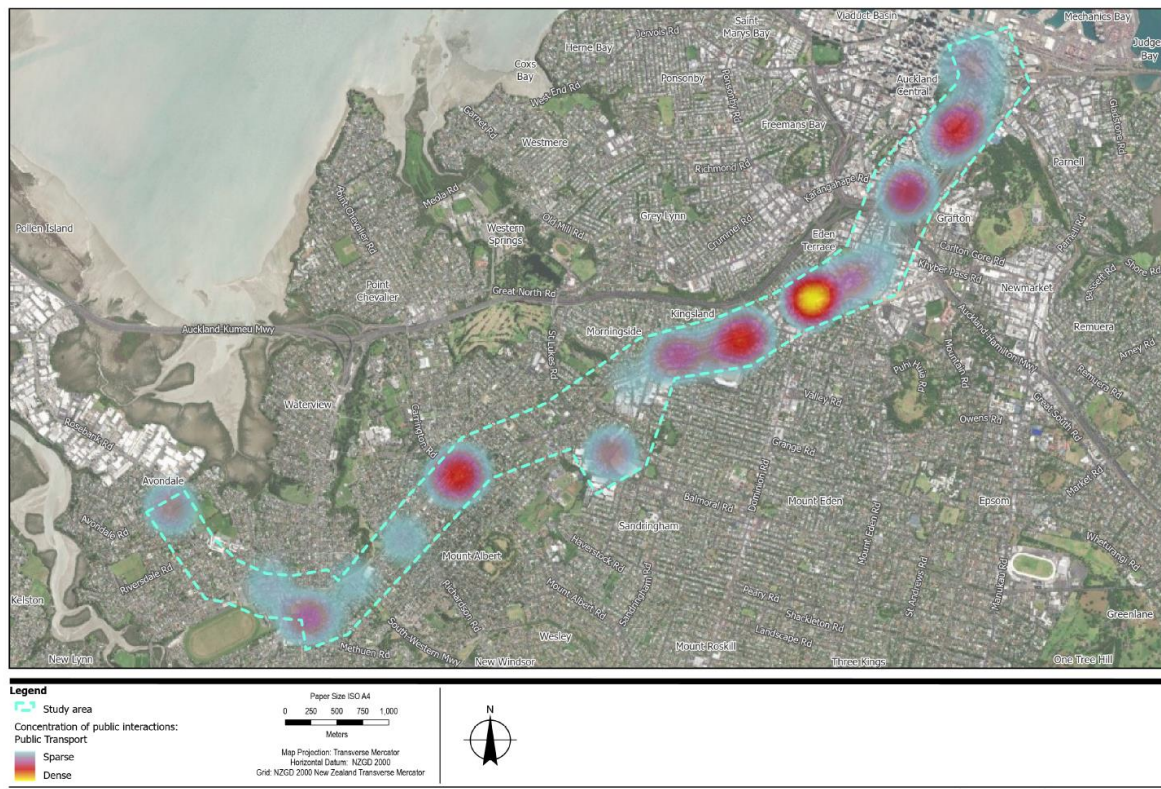


Figure 8 Heat map distribution of public transport comments along the corridor

Summary of key themes

Key themes within the category of public transport included:

1. Provision of bus lanes

Comments in this theme included recommendations for extensions to existing bus lanes, incorporation of new bus lanes, clearways, and the restrictions on parking to allow for bus movement.

2. Bus stop improvements

Recommendations were made regarding the location of bus shelters, additional bus stops and interchanges, the relocation of bus stops for optimal utilisation, timetabling and the use of the AT app.

3. Increased services

Focuses on timetabling at peak times and the requirement for capacity during these times, it also identifies the existing issue of reliability and frequency.

4. Trains

Includes the connection to other public transport along the corridor as well as the identification of light rail opportunities.

Most liked comments on the interactive map

“This motorway-style interchange blights the area. It's very hostile to walking, cycling and PT users. If Dominion Rd light rail goes ahead then the interchange will need to be removed. Why not get rid of it during this project?” 👍 (29) [New North Road and Dominion Road intersection]

“Make Grafton Bridge bus and bike only 24/7” 👍 (11)

“Add a major bus stop somewhere along this stop with a signalised pedestrian crossing that heavily favours pedestrians to connect with the new rail station.” 👍 (10) [110 New North Road]

“Northbound bus lane needs to continue here through to the Grafton road intersection. Busses regularly get held up here. And it's a source of frustration for bus users.” 👍 (9) [22 Symonds Street]

“Bus stops at St Lukes could be better integrated with the mall and allow for easier transfers with services on St Lukes Road.” 👍 (9)

Walking

Walking received 233 comments from the community. The geographical spread of comments as illustrated in Figure 9, shows the majority of comments were located at the Symonds Street end of the corridor.

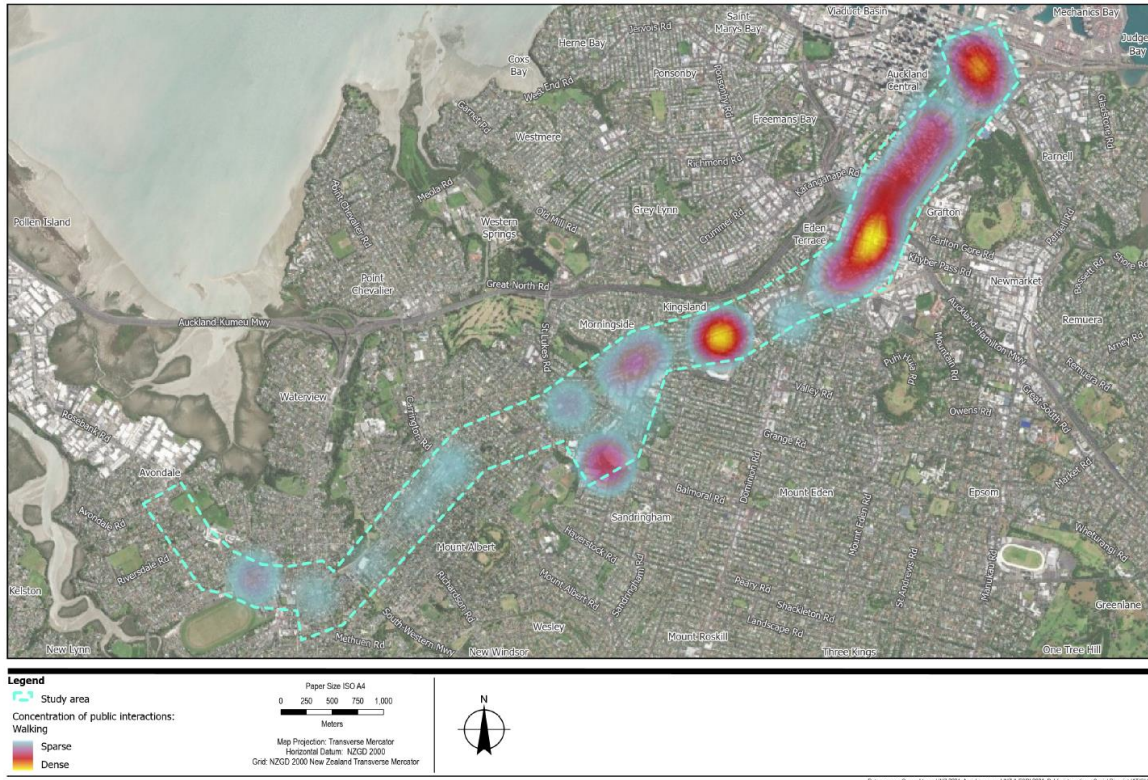


Figure 9 Heat map of walking comments along the corridor

Summary of key themes

Key themes within the category of walking included:

1. Walking infrastructure

Feedback in this theme related to the poor provision of infrastructure to support pedestrian requirements. Comments discussed lack of disability access, poor footpath quality, footpath obstructions, lack of crossings, poor wayfinding and a lack of pedestrian facilities.

2. Connectivity

Feedback within this theme included comments regarding the lack of links between footpaths and connections to local public transport stations and roads. It also includes wayfinding.

3. Parking (as an effect on walking)

This theme included comments about parking and its impact on the pedestrian environment particularly when it obstructs movement. Comments were made about car dominance along the corridor.

Most liked comments on the interactive map

“This square needs a few trees to make it a good place to eat snacks etc while waiting for your train/bus.” 👍 (17) [Kingsland Train Station]

“Sidewalk is narrow here for the number of pedestrians, but there are 11 on-street car parks? Silly place for on-street parking, please repurpose this space better.” 👍 (16) [90 Symonds Street]

“A good spot for a pedestrian crossing - would link up with the stairs which access beach road (though those stairs desperately need some TLC too).” 👍 (15) [122 Anzac Avenue]

“Very dangerous crossing for pedestrians, as cars often pick up speed here as they prepare to get onto the motorway.” 👍 (15) [SH1 entrance from Symonds Street]

“Unable to cross New North Road from the Westernmost side of Morningside Drive (incomplete traffic light pedestrian crossing for all directions. Replacing this with an option to cross any direction at the same time would be good.” 👍 (15) [Morningside Drive and New North Road intersection]

“It is not possible to walk along this route with an umbrella or a pushchair due to all of the poles and bus shelters. It is really difficult and most people have to walk on the road.” 👍 (12) [East side of Symonds Street between Grafton Bridge and Alex Evans Street]

Vehicles

The vehicles category received the least number of comments during the engagement, with a total number of 191 comments. The geographical spread of comments as illustrated in Figure 10, show the most concentrated area of comments relating to vehicles were centred around Kingsland and Mount Albert, and secondary locations in Uptown and the Learning Quarter.

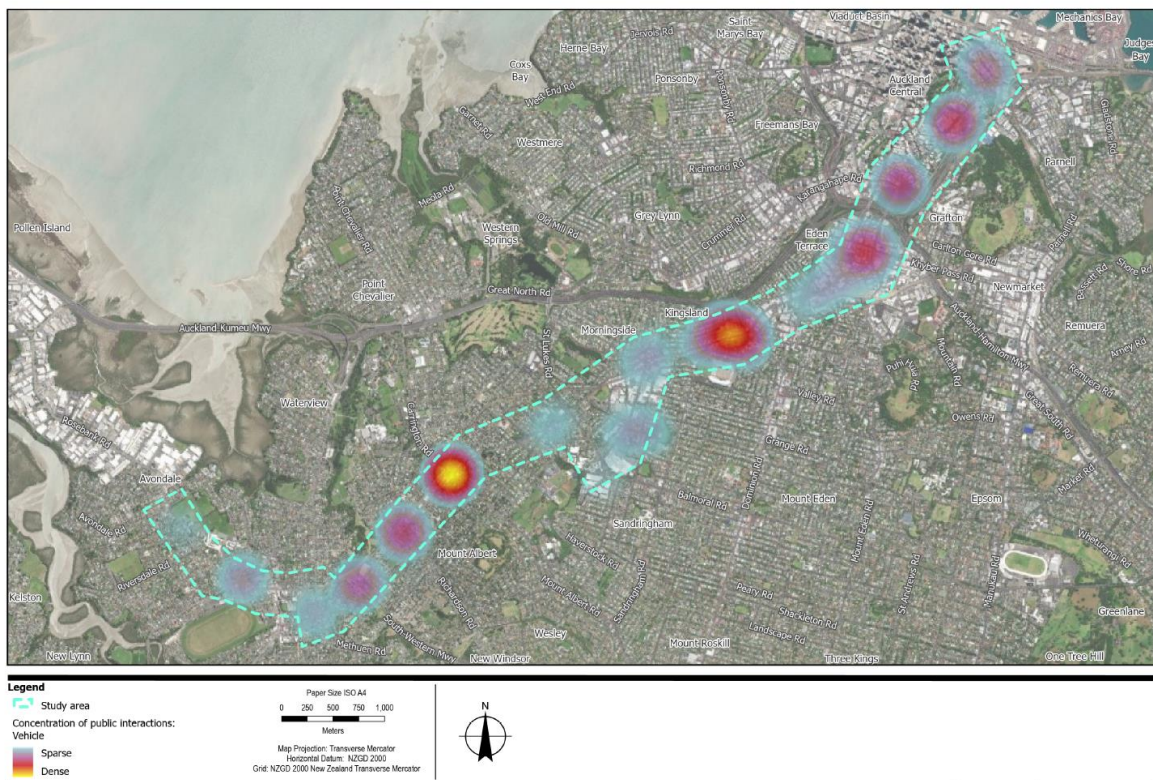


Figure 10 Heat map of vehicle comments along the corridor

Two main themes cover the movement of vehicles along the New North Road these could be summarised as comments relating to alternative modes of transportation and safety as outlined below:

1. Modes of transport

A range of comments in relation to the different modes of transport that are used along this corridor, suggesting the need for a more active transport focus. Recommendations for improvement include; walking and cycling infrastructure, reciprocal to this a reduction in parking provisioning was suggested as a way to improve the road space for active transport use (cycle lanes).

2. Safety

Comments in this theme discussed the need for changing traffic light phasing to ease congestion, alteration to the layout of traffic lanes and the need for transport infrastructure to support active transport (through buffers and bollards)

Most liked comments on the interactive map

“Vehicles entering this hotel (or stopping outside of it) regularly hold up buses. General traffic northbound lanes could be reduced from two to one to give more space for buses to pass.” 👍 (14) [85-97 Symonds Street]

“Far too many cars park across footpath on ANZAC Avenue, especially southern side, reducing public amenity and creating a hazard for pedestrians - should be more enforcement and perhaps some bollards.” 👍 (13) [76 Anzac Avenue]

“This intersection is bigger than Texas, there's gotta be some way we can make it more human-scale?” 👍 (11) [Ash Street and Rosebank Road]

“Forcing straight and right turning traffic into the same lane, then slamming a red right turn arrow inevitably clogs the right hand lane city bound.” 👍 (11) [New North Road and Mt Albert Road intersection]

“This intersection is hazardous and perhaps right turn movements out of Onslow Road should be prohibited.” 👍 (10) [Onslow Road and Sandringham Road intersection]

“Three lanes here (two car lanes + one bus lane) but only two lanes after the traffic lights? Lose one of the car lanes and make it simple and safer.” 👍 (9) [Kingsland Road and Sandringham Road intersection]