

Eastern Busway frequently asked questions

Updated 8 March 2022



Image: artist impression of a busway station on Ti Rakau Drive

1. What is the Eastern Busway?

The Eastern Busway is a significant project for Auckland and forms a key part of the region's rapid transport network. Similar to the Northern Busway, it will create separate lanes for new high-frequency bus services to connect people from Botany, Pakuranga and the surrounding suburbs with the rail network in Panmure. The project includes cycling and walking paths, safety, environment and roading improvements, and a Reeves Road flyover, giving people a range of travel options and more reliable journey times.

The busway will increase access to jobs and education, lead to more social and community opportunities, attract investment and growth, enable urban development, and help reduce emissions. It is much more than a transport project.

2. What are the features and benefits of the Eastern Busway?

Better connections and sustainable travel options for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, bus and train customers; a reliable 40-minute bus and train trip between Botany Town Centre and Britomart (saving 20 minutes); 12km of safe and separated walking and cycling routes; 5km of busway between Pakuranga and Botany fully separated from other traffic; 5 proposed new bus stations with quality facilities; Reeves Road flyover reducing vehicle congestion around Pakuranga Town Centre; and 24,000 more people with access to a bus station within 1km of home.

3. How will the project be built?

The project will be consented and constructed in stages. Consents will be sought in the Pakuranga area first with some early enabling work due to start in 2022. Consents for the remaining areas of the project are expected to be sought during 2022 with construction to follow once approved.

4. What prompted AT to consider a change of alignment in the commercial section of the busway?

In 2018 AT consulted on the Pakuranga to Botany busway route, which included the Ti Rakau Drive option through the commercial area. Further investigation of the design identified constraints relating to safety and access issues, length of time for construction and disruption, and cost.

The Burswood route was considered an option in mid-2021 after careful evaluation of its likely social, environmental and financial impacts. The next step in the evaluation process is consultation with potentially affected property owners and the wider community. We contacted property owners from 1 November 2021 - as soon as possible following Covid Level 4 and 3 regulations - after discussion with partners and Howick Ward stakeholders on the appropriate time to consult at what we all acknowledge is a challenging time for Aucklanders.

5. What other alignment options were considered?

The Eastern Busway is all about providing access to high quality transport options for as many people as possible. A lot of research was done into transport types, and an urban busway, connecting to the rail network at Panmure, was recommended as the best way to support growth and improve public transport between east Auckland and the city centre. A busway is a rapid bus system where buses have their own dedicated carriageway, just like the busway section between Panmure and Pakuranga that opened last year and the Northern Express on Auckland's North Shore.

In 2018 Auckland Transport (AT) shared a draft design for community feedback which showed the busway continuing from Pakuranga along the middle of Ti Rakau Drive through the commercial section towards Botany. Several issues were identified with the design in the commercial area of Ti Rakau Drive including safety, cutting access to commercial properties, permanent impacts to businesses, increased cost, unreliable travel times and delays to freight due to congested intersections and disruption while the busway is built.

AT and the project team have assessed several options through the commercial area of Ti Rakau Drive, including those suggested by the community during the 2021 consultation. Each option has different challenges and benefits. Detailed information about the 14 broad designs considered during 2021/2022 is available on the Eastern Busway webpage.

6. How were the different options assessed?

A number of route options, along with the Ti Rakau Drive option considered in 2018, went through a multi-criteria analysis process where different specialists carefully assess the benefits and impacts of each one. Based on that assessment a preferred route was selected and then further developed to ensure it was technically feasible. That is the option we are now consulting on as part of the wider project.

The impacts on Burswood property owners and the community were evaluated as part of the decision-making process to propose the Burswood route option. Further impacts will be considered as part of the landowner engagement, community consultation and consenting process.

7. What are the benefits of the proposed Burswood option?

- It would significantly increase access to a rapid transport network and walking and cycling connections for nearby communities
- It would be safer for all transport modes including walking, cycling, buses and road users. Placing the cycleway and walkway around the back of the commercial area removes them from Ti Rakau Drive and reduces the risk of interaction between vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians and busy commercial driveways.
- It would improve bus journey efficiency and reliability by removing the need for buses to go through 5 heavily congested intersections with traffic lights, as well as reducing the impact on general traffic and loss of access to the adjoining commercial properties.
- It would reduce the impact to freight movements along Ti Rakau Drive
- It would not disrupt access into and out of commercial properties
- It would be approximately 12-18 months quicker to build, reducing impacts to road users, freight operators and businesses along Ti Rakau Drive. There would also be no impact on the Transpower high voltage cable.
- It would open up the area for future urban development

8. What are the policies on urban development and the impacts of the proposed Burswood Station on population and employment?

The Eastern Busway will create opportunities to change the way that nearby land is used. In 2020 the government introduced the National Policy Statement for Urban Development (NPS-UD). It

supports growth along rapid transit corridors such as the Eastern Busway. Under the NPS-UD, land within walking distance of each station can be developed more intensely. That change is likely to lead to a mix of building sizes along the busway, supporting an increase in households and population that usually follow improvements in public transport.

There would be approximately 1800 people and 2050 jobs within 1km of the proposed station near the Burswood community.

9. What happens to land that is needed during construction but not for the finished busway?

Some land will be used for construction but will not be needed in the long term. The residual land will be transferred back to Auckland Council at the end of the project.

10. What are the next steps and will I have more opportunities to have my say?

There will be further opportunities for property owners and the community to provide feedback in 2022 during the detailed design and consenting processes. We anticipate the required approvals and consents for each section will be publicly notified, which means that anybody can make a submission on the proposal. Notice of the application will be made public.

11. What features does the project design include?

The Pakuranga to Botany link includes a dedicated busway with pedestrian and cycling facilities between Pakuranga Town Centre to Ti Rakau Bridge, and Ti Rakau Bridge to Botany Town Centre, with stations at Pakuranga and Botany and 3 intermediate stations; Edgewater, Gossamer and a proposed station at Burswood.

12. How much will the project cost?

The Pakuranga to Botany stage of the Eastern Busway has a confirmed budget of \$867 million from the Regional Land Transport Fund. Additional funding has recently been assigned to prioritise the delivery of this regionally significant project.

13. How is the project being funded?

The project is jointly funded by the NZ Government, Auckland Council and the Regional Fuel Tax.

14. How are iwi involved in the project?

The project team is partnering with mana whenua to ensure that Māori cultural values and perspectives are recognised and integrated into the planning of each stage of the project.

15. What is the Eastern Busway Alliance?

In October 2020 AT formed the Eastern Busway Alliance with Fletcher, ACCIONA, AECOM and Jacobs to design and consent the Pakuranga to Botany section of the Eastern Busway. The construction is expected to start in 2022 and to be completed in 2026 subject to consent approvals and the easing of current pandemic restrictions.

16. How can I get information about community consultation and provide feedback?

The Eastern Busway project team is keen to engage with our partners, stakeholders, customers and community and provide opportunities for everyone to give feedback on the proposed project design.

In November and December 2021, the project team held its community consultation through an online consultation room. All feedback was reviewed and presented to Auckland Transport for consideration.

The project website with information in several languages is the main communication portal until Auckland's restrictions ease. Information includes a project guide, a short video, and a freephone number and email address.

We are currently investigating options to hold information sessions online, until restrictions are lifted and in person pop-in sessions can be hosted in East Auckland. The project team is working closely with Auckland Council, Auckland Transport staff, Elected Representatives, Howick Local Board, mana whenua, ministerial departments, diverse cultural and interest groups, business and residents' associations, places of worship, schools and media to share information about the project through their networks.

17. Will there be a park and ride at Botany Station?

A park and ride at Botany has previously been considered by Auckland Transport but is not proposed as a part of the Eastern Busway project.

Auckland's public transport network is built around a 'hub and spoke' model where customers can use feeder bus services to access 'hubs', or interchanges, to transfer to other bus, train or ferry services. Botany Town Centre is an example of a public transport hub which connects many local and frequent bus services.

AT's strategy for providing new park and ride facilities is to locate park and rides on the outskirts of the public transport network, for example in low density semi-rural areas, to serve people who cannot access public transport hubs or rapid transit stations using feeder bus services. This extends the catchment of the public transport network while encouraging people who can do so to walk, cycle or use a feeder bus.

18. How is sustainability being included in the project?

The project team is using the Infrastructure Sustainability Council tool to help ensure the environment will be protected during construction. We will support local businesses and inspire healthy communities in south and east Auckland by being a good neighbour, and supporting the community through disruption, impacts and change; using resources and materials efficiently; encouraging the use of walking, cycling and public transport; protecting and enhancing the natural environment, and using innovative urban design so that people feel connected to the local area; helping the community to thrive by providing employment and training opportunities; supporting the local economy by providing opportunities for local businesses, and deconstructing (disassembly and reuse or relocation of) buildings that require removal, diverting waste from landfill.

19. What support will be available to the community during construction?

The project team understands that construction of the Eastern Busway will have an impact on the community of East Auckland. We are working on a plan to help support the community through the changes created by the project. We will be keen to hear community ideas as part of our consultation. We are keen to ensure that residents and businesses continue to thrive while the project is being built, and that the community can look forward to experiencing the benefits of the busway when it is finished.

20. What is the timeframe for construction?

Some early construction is due to start in the Pakuranga area in mid to late 2022 and progress in stages to Botany, once the appropriate consents are granted. As each stage is completed it will be opened for use. For example, work in the Pakuranga Town Centre, including the Reeves Road flyover, bus station and intersection upgrades, will be completed in one stage. This approach will be to minimise disruption as much as possible and enable early benefits. The estimated completion date is 2026 subject to consent approvals and the easing of current pandemic restrictions.

21. How will you reduce disruption caused by construction?

We have received feedback about the importance of minimising disruption as much as possible during the construction phase. People raised concerns about noise, dust and traffic disruption and suggested measures to reduce environmental impact, ensuring access to walking and cycling paths is retained, completing the project as quickly as possible and minimising construction noise and impacts such as dust as much as possible. The planning and construction teams The project team is working on a plan to help support the community through the changes created by the project and will include the community's ideas gathered during consultation to ensure residents and businesses continue to thrive while the busway is being built.

22. How will I be able to access the shops, school and other key amenities during construction?

Pedestrian and vehicle access to amenities will continue to be available during trading hours. Detours may be in place and will be clearly indicated. Allow extra time for your journey and plan your travel in advance as delays will be likely during construction.

23. Why not just add bus lanes on Ti Rakau Drive?

AT has previously considered bus lanes but those did not meet the project objectives, specifically the reliability and travel time improvements to provide an efficient and reliable rapid transport system. In addition there were safety concerns due to vehicles entering and exiting the many commercial properties along Ti Rakau Drive.

24. What key themes arose from community consultation?

There was broad support for the busway and its overall objectives but some strong objection to the proposed Burswood alignment and its impact on homes and the community.

Submitters encouraged active modes and cycling through the design of roads, paths, cycleway connections and station facilities. Suggestions have been made for improvements to encourage uptake at several points on the busway, walking and cycling paths and at stations. Mixed views were expressed about the allocation of road space and there were concerns about construction impacts, disruption and the potential loss of green space and reserve land.

25. What happened to the feedback collected from community consultation?

The feedback that has been conveyed to the project team is being carefully considered as part of the development of the project design. The key themes are being shared with iwi partners, stakeholders, and available on the project website in early February. In late February Auckland Transport approved the design for the busway between Pakuranga and Ti Rakau Bridge and would

like to take more time to review the community's feedback on the proposed busway design between Ti Rakau Bridge and Botany, including the connection at Burswood. The AT Board will meet again at the end of March 2022 to make that decision and will be shared with property owners and the community shortly after.

Detailed design and engagement will take place during 2022 and consenting will progress in stages. Ongoing engagement with mana whenua, Elected Representatives, Howick Local Board, stakeholders and the community will continue throughout the project.

26. Who can I contact with queries?

- Email info@easternbusway.nz
- Call the project freephone line on 0800 BUSWAY (0800 287 929)
- Website: easternbusway.nz