

Eastern Busway Pakuranga to Botany

Feedback from community engagement
from March to June 2022

June 2022



Eastern Busway

1 Executive summary

The Eastern Busway Alliance undertook community engagement activities between February and June 2022 focusing on the proposed alignment of the busway between Ti Rakau Drive Bridge and Botany Town Centre. The sessions followed community engagement in November and December 2021 and provided further opportunities for property owners, residents and businesses to talk to the Eastern Busway Alliance, ask questions and voice concerns. Feedback from this engagement will continue to be shared with the Auckland Transport (AT) Board to inform their decision on the alignment for this section of the busway.

The 2022 community engagement between March and June 2022 included:

- three virtual community meetings held in March 2022 with ~55 attendees
- one in-person community meeting held in April 2022 with ~85 attendees
- two face to face pop-in information days in Burswood in May 2022 with ~92 attendees
- two face to face pop-in information days in Burswood in June 2022 with ~64 attendees.

Invitations to the sessions were circulated widely to property owners, Burswood residents, nearby businesses, project partners and stakeholders.

The main feedback themes from the engagement were consistent with those of the 2021 consultation. As the conversations have progressed, particularly in the June 2022 information sessions, affected Burswood property owners talked about the stress incurred by the delayed decision on the busway alignment. The residents' clear sentiment was that they would like a decision to be made quickly, so they know where they stand and can plan accordingly.

Key feedback themes throughout the engagement have included:

- opposition to the proposed alignment through Burswood from most of the residential community
- distress from affected property owners about losing their homes and potentially being unable to afford an alternative property of a similar standard and location as their existing home
- fears from residents about the potential impacts that the Burswood Station would bring to their small and unique community including impacts on safety, crime and parking
- requests for alternative designs, especially the Ti Rakau Drive alignment that was previously consulted on in 2018, as well as an elevated busway structure and other design elements
- suspicions and concerns about future urban development in the area and the extent to which this had influenced the recommended Burswood alignment
- requests for a park and ride facility in the area
- concerns around construction impacts
- environmental concerns particularly questions about impacts to the coastal marine area, wetlands, and flora and fauna in the local area
- questions and improvement suggestions relating to the communication and engagement process and how the alliance informed the community of the April and May 2022 sessions.

In addition, the following points were made frequently during the June 2022 engagement sessions:

- requests from affected Burswood property owners for the decision to be made quickly, so they have planning certainty
- feedback that the ongoing uncertainty is creating stress and impacting on property owners' mental health and wellbeing, especially since property values are falling. There were also concerns that the alignment decision may be further delayed
- support among businesses for the proposed alignment, and a concern about the impact on commercial premises of potentially reverting to the Ti Rakau Drive alignment. There were fears that a busway along Ti Rakau Drive would be devastating to local businesses
- some support for the proposed alignment from residents who could see the benefit of having a bus station within easy walking distance
- questions around the design and construction of the busway between Pakuranga Town Centre and Ti Rakau Drive Bridge.

Feedback from the March and April 2022 sessions was summarised in a report titled 'Eastern Busway community meetings summary Apr 22'. The May 2022 sessions were summarised in the 'Eastern Busway community meetings - May 2022 – final' report. Both reports have been shared with the AT Board, and circulated widely to participants and the community, including being posted on the Eastern Busway website.

This report summarises the feedback received from all eight community engagement sessions undertaken between March and June 2022 and will be shared with the AT Board ahead of its upcoming meeting to help inform their decision. This report will also be available on the project website.

The alliance will provide further opportunities for community engagement following the AT Board decision on the overall alignment.

2 Background and process

The Eastern Busway Alliance has been eager to provide in-person opportunities for the East Auckland community to discuss the project and ask questions, and the recent easing of Covid-19 restrictions has enabled that to happen.

March and April 2022 engagement

The alliance held three online and one in-person community meetings in March and April 2022, which have been documented in the '[Eastern Busway community meetings summary April 2022](#)' report. Specifically, these comprised:

- three independently facilitated online community information sessions, hosted using Zoom, on 22, 24 and 26 March 2022, when Auckland was at the red setting of the Covid-19 Protection Framework. The sessions were designed for affected property owners and community members around Burswood, and focused on the proposed section of the busway between Ti Rakau Drive Bridge and Guys Reserve. Approximately 55 community members took part.
- an independently facilitated, in-person community meeting at the East City Wesleyan Church in Burswood in the early evening of 20 April 2022. As with the online information sessions, this session was designed for affected property owners and community members around Burswood, and focused on the proposed section of the busway between Ti Rakau Drive Bridge and Guys Reserve. It was arranged during March 2022 when Auckland was at the red setting of the Covid-19 Protection Framework and the maximum number of attendees was 200. Meeting invitations were therefore sent directly to affected parties only, to ensure the meeting could take place within the legal capacity limit. Approximately 85 community members attended. A translator attended to facilitate questions and discussions in Mandarin and Cantonese.

During the sessions, alliance team members provided a project overview, an outline of the 14 design options that were investigated for the section of the busway between Ti Rakau Drive Bridge and Botany Town Centre (including the 2018 design), an overview of the decision-making process and next steps. This was followed by an interactive question and answer session, during which community participants raised a range of questions and issues.

May 2022 engagement

The alliance held two in-person community information pop-in sessions in May 2022, which have been documented in the '[Eastern Busway community meetings - May 2022 – final](#)' report. Specifically, these comprised:

- two information sessions at the East City Wesleyan Church in Burswood, on Thursday 19 May 2022 from 3pm to 7pm and on Saturday 21 May 2022 from 10am to 1pm. In total approximately 92 people attended the sessions: 26 people on Thursday 19 May and 66 people on Saturday 21 May

- a meeting between representatives of the Howick Residents and Ratepayers Association, Burswood Resident Collective, AT and the alliance. The meeting was hosted during the 19 May 2022 pop-in session, in a private room from 4pm to 5.30pm.

The purpose of the sessions was to provide an opportunity for community members, residents, businesses and affected property owners to talk directly with the alliance, raise questions and voice concerns. Again, the engagement focused on the proposed section of the busway between Ti Rakau Drive Bridge and Guys Reserve. The sessions were designed to facilitate detailed, individual conversations between community members and project team members, enabling people to engage freely, without needing to speak in front of a large group. Each session provided time for detailed conversations in an informal setting with access to maps and visual information, with most attendees staying at least 20 to 30 minutes to talk to the team.

A translator was present at both sessions to facilitate questions and discussions in Mandarin and Cantonese.

Invitations to the two sessions were widely circulated to Burswood residents and nearby businesses, project partners and stakeholders.

On 26 May 2022, the AT Board considered the route options between Ti Rakau Drive Bridge and Botany Town Centre and the feedback gathered during the engagement described above. They also heard directly from the Howick Residents and Ratepayers Association and Burswood Resident Collective representatives.

The AT Board requested the Eastern Busway Alliance to undertake further community engagement during June, ahead of their meeting in late June to make a decision on the alignment for this section of the busway.

June 2022 engagement

The alliance held two further in-person community information pop-in sessions in June 2022. They were held at the East City Wesleyan Church in Burswood, on Wednesday 15 June from 3pm to 6pm and on Saturday 18 June from 10am to 1pm. In total approximately 64 people attended the sessions: 34 on Wednesday 15 June and 30 on Saturday 18 June.

The purpose of the sessions was to provide further opportunity for property owners, residents, businesses and stakeholder groups to engage directly with the alliance, to pass on their feedback and have their questions answered. The format of the sessions was the same as those held in May 2022, and again focused on the proposed section of the busway between Ti Rakau Drive Bridge and Guys Reserve, although a number of participants did ask questions about the section of the busway between Pakuranga Town Centre and Ti Rakau Drive Bridge as well. Attendees stayed for an average of 30 to 60 minutes and had often detailed conversations with several members of the alliance team.

A translator was present at both sessions to facilitate questions and discussions in Mandarin and Cantonese.

Invitations to the two sessions were widely circulated to property owners, Burswood residents and nearby businesses, project partners and stakeholders, using the following methods:

- Mana whenua partners, elected representatives and Howick Local Board members were informed of the sessions in person and by email, and were invited to attend them.
- A bilingual invitation flyer (see Appendix) was delivered to all residential properties in the Burswood peninsula and emailed to those property owners who would potentially be affected by the proposed alignment.
- The flyer was delivered to businesses along both sides of Ti Rakau Drive, between Greenmount Drive and Ti Rakau Drive Bridge, as well as those on Torrens Rd, and also emailed to businesses for whom we had an email address.
- Invitations were posted to those property owners in the area who had been previously engaged by AT.
- Invitations were emailed to participants of earlier engagement sessions, those who provided feedback during the 2021 consultation, and those who had signed up to the Eastern Busway mailing list.
- The sessions were mentioned in the June [project newsletter](#), which was widely distributed.
- Invitations were also emailed to key stakeholders, including the Howick Residents and Ratepayers Association, Burswood Resident Collective, Greater East Tamaki Business Association, Greater Auckland, Bike Auckland, ethnic community representatives, and Naisi Chen, Labour List MP for Botany.

3. Summary of feedback and input

Feedback across the eight engagement sessions held between March and June 2022 focused on several key themes about the section of the busway between Ti Rakau Drive Bridge and Guys Reserve. The themes are consistent with the feedback on this section of the busway received during the 2021 engagement sessions and have re-enforced community sentiment.

During the June 2022 sessions affected property owners talked more about the impact of the delay to the decision on their mental health. The clear sentiment is that they would like a decision made quickly, so they know where they stand: *"We just want a decision made, is it yes or no? The market is volatile, people are stressed."*

The main themes were:

- strong local community opposition, mostly from residents, to the proposed alignment through Burswood
- requests for a decision to be made quickly
- requests for alternative designs, especially the Ti Rakau Drive alignment that was previously consulted on in 2018, as well as an elevated structure and other options
- support among businesses for the proposed alignment, and a concern about the impact on commercial premises of potentially reverting to the Ti Rakau Drive alignment
- some support for the proposed alignment from residents (especially during the June sessions) who could see the benefit of having a bus station within easy walking distance
- distress from affected property owners about losing their homes and potentially being unable to afford an alternative property of a similar standard and location as their existing home
- fears from residents about the potential impacts that the Burswood Station would bring to their small and unique community including impacts on safety, crime and parking
- suspicions and concerns about future urban development in the area and the extent to which this had influenced the recommended Burswood alignment
- requests for a park and ride facility in the area
- concerns around construction impacts
- environmental concerns particularly questions about impacts to the coastal marine area, wetlands, and flora and fauna in the local area
- questions and improvement suggestions relating to the communication and engagement process.

In addition, particularly during the June engagement, there were questions around the design and construction of the section of the busway between Pakuranga Town Centre and Ti Rakau Drive Bridge.

Burswood community impact

In line with feedback from the 2021 consultation, there was strong opposition from residents to the proposed alignment between Ti Rakau Drive Bridge and Guys Reserve. Many Burswood residents and community members were dismayed at the potential impact to their homes and community:

- there were significant concerns regarding the impacts to property and property owners in the Burswood area, with a view that there is a lack of affordable alternatives for affected residents
- some people were worried about their ability to access and/or afford a mortgage to purchase an alternative property in the current financial and housing climate, and requested that AT provides a mortgage guarantee
- there were questions around the valuation process and the timing of that given the changing housing market
- there was concern about the impact of the proposed route on residents' mental health
- a number of attendees shared concerns about the impacts of the busway on the community if the proposed Burswood alignment were to be confirmed, such as:
 - increased traffic and demand for parking in the area, particularly around Bunnings given how congested that area is now
 - safety and security threats during construction and when the busway is operational, with fears around a potential increase in crime and antisocial behaviour in Burswood
 - questions around the ongoing noise of the busway operation and whether there would be a noise barrier or wall to reduce these impacts.

In response to this feedback, the Eastern Busway Alliance:

- acknowledges the anger and frustration Burswood residents have expressed with regards to the potential impact of the proposed alignment, especially as it comes during a time of uncertainty and pressures from the rising costs of living and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic
- has provided a dedicated property specialist to work alongside each potentially impacted property owner to understand individual circumstances and support requirements
- has communicated this community sentiment to the Auckland Transport Board on a number of occasions, to help inform their decision making
- will continue to provide opportunities for the community to meet and discuss their concerns with the project team
- is working with Pakuranga Counselling Centre to provide free mental health support services to affected property owners and other community members where needed
- will incorporate the concerns around traffic, safety and security and operational noise into the development of the design should the proposed alignment be confirmed.

During more recent community engagement, particularly through the June 2022 information sessions, affected Burswood property owners talked increasingly about the stress and worry caused by the delayed decision on the busway alignment. There was a strong sentiment from these residents that they would like a decision to be made quickly, so they know where they stand and can plan accordingly. These residents still oppose the proposed alignment, but their primary request is for a decision to be made, so they can start thinking about next steps. A number of affected property owners mentioned that house prices are currently

falling, and they were worried that this would affect the value they would be offered for their home. They were also concerned that the decision might be further delayed.

"We just want the decision, and your valuation. We want to understand the next steps, how much money are you going to offer us?"

"We've been looking on Trade Me for properties but prices are dropping and it's hard to know what we'll be able to afford. We've heard the neighbours are very stressed."

In response to this feedback, the Eastern Busway Alliance:

- acknowledges the impact of this uncertainty on property owners
- will communicate this to the AT Board, who are carefully considering all aspects of the design before making a decision
- will continue to provide free mental health support services to affected property owners and other community members where needed, through the Pakuranga Counselling Centre.

Busway design between Ti Rakau Drive Bridge and Guys Reserve:

Among the residential community there was a preference for the design to revert to the 2018 design, with a busway running along Ti Rakau Drive between Ti Rakau Drive Bridge and Guys Reserve, because it avoids impacting residential properties:

- attendees expressed the view that this design would provide greater access to the commercial area to the south of Ti Rakau Drive and in the Harris Road area
- some felt that it should be possible to accommodate a busway along Ti Rakau Drive without extensive widening or property impact
- people pointed out that there had previously been a bus route that followed Burswood Drive, but it was removed due to low patronage. Participants felt that this demonstrated a Burswood Station and busway alignment was poorly considered.

Requests for alternative designs for this section of the busway included:

- reverting to the route proposed in 2018, along Ti Rakau Drive. Participants felt this would avoid impacting the Burswood community and provide better access to the commercial section and adjacent businesses
- an elevated structure over Ti Rakau Drive, between Ti Rakau Drive Bridge and the Huntington Drive area. People suggested this as an alternative way to locate the busway in line with Ti Rakau Drive and reduce the impact on properties
- having bus lanes along Ti Rakau Drive instead of a dedicated busway – again removing the need for property impact and acquisition.

However, businesses and business representatives expressed the opposite view – a preference for the current proposed design over the 2018 Ti Rakau Drive alignment, based on the potential impact of the online option on business performance:

- business groups pointed to a 30% downturn in turnover caused by previous roadworks on Ti Rakau Drive that were of a significantly smaller scale than would be required to build the busway if the online option was selected – they feared the construction impacts “*would be devastating, especially to small business owners in the area*”
- some businesses said they would not be able to survive if the busway was along Ti Rakau Drive. They felt that the construction impact and the permanent effect of the busway would likely put them out of business
- businesses were also concerned that the online option would permanently sever access to a number of commercial properties along both sides of Ti Rakau Drive, that would also affect business performance

During the June engagement sessions there was also support expressed for the proposed alignment by a number of Burswood residents, who were looking forward to having close access to a bus station and/or improved cycle paths.

In response to this feedback, the Eastern Busway Alliance:

- has investigated the alternative design options suggested by the community, including the Ti Rakau Drive option, an elevated option, bus lanes and the reallocation of road space on Ti Rakau Drive. Each of those options has operational challenges including property access to busy commercial properties, safety, journey time reliability impacts and delays to freight and general traffic, along with significant construction disruption and cost
- prepared an overview of this analysis and circulated it widely, including having it available at all of the community information sessions. This report is available on the project website [here](#)
- has reviewed the proposed consenting strategy for this section of busway to enable a process that is as open and transparent as possible.

Other feedback from the community about this section of the busway included:

- there was support for safe and accessible cycling paths linking Botany and Pakuranga town centres, and suggestions for more cycling and pedestrian links to existing pathways to further encourage usage, such as connections to the commercial area and south to Stonedon Drive to Highbrook, from Kenwick Place and into Golfland Drive and Corta Bella Place, and south along Ti Irirangi Drive and through Botany to Flat Bush
- there was a sentiment that the busway will be under-utilised and/or that services will be unreliable, with questions about the potential frequency and usage of buses through the day and evening

- several attendees thought the design should include a park and ride facility, and that it would be necessary in order to encourage people to access and use the busway. Alongside this:
 - there were questions around feeder services, with a view that current services would be inadequate and would not replace the need for a park and ride facility
 - some people with mobility issues had concerns about how they would get to the stations without a park and ride

Eastern Busway Alliance response:

- The Eastern Busway will deliver cycling and walking paths from Botany to Panmure, through the Pakuranga Town Centre. Connections to adjoining cycling and pedestrian pathways are being discussed with AT and walking and cycling advocacy groups.
- Park and Rides in Botany and Pakuranga have previously been considered by AT but are 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
- will work with AT's operations team to provide the feedback on the bus services and will request a comprehensive review of local services prior to the busway opening.

Urban development:

Alongside feedback about the busway alignment, residents expressed significant concern about the potential for extensive future urban development and/or social housing in Burswood that may be triggered by the busway:

- there was a perception that the Burswood alignment had been recommended because of the potential for Eke Panuku to deliver future urban development in the area
- there was a suspicion that Burswood properties affected by the busway construction would be rented by Kainga Ora to provide social housing once they had been purchased, until the property was removed
- there was also a fear that the wider Burswood peninsula could be developed to provide social housing and that this outcome had contributed to the rationale for selecting this option as the preferred design
- there were questions around the process for any 'up-zoning' that may occur under the National Policy Statement – Urban Development (NPS-UD) once the busway is operational.

In response to this feedback, the Eastern Busway Alliance has clarified that:

- Eke Panuku Development Auckland is the Auckland Council controlled organisation that delivers urban regeneration across Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland and manage Council owned properties
- in relation to properties purchased by Auckland Council for the Eastern Busway project - if the construction programme provides an opportunity to lease out these properties before they are removed, they would be managed by Eke Panuku. Kainga Ora will not be using these properties for social housing
- the NPS-UD requires large and growing cities like Auckland to enable more high-density buildings within walkable distances to existing and planned rapid transit stops – such as those proposed at Burswood, Gossamer, Edgewater and Pakuranga Town Centre. This would apply to whichever location is selected for the station between Ti Rakau Drive Bridge and Guys Reserve. Any up-zoning as a result of the NPS-UD would require a plan change, with public notification and hearings carried out by independent commissioners
- further information on the overall context of housing intensification across Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland has been published in our June [project newsletter](#).

Construction and environmental impacts:

- there were fears about the impact to the community caused by construction, such as:
 - traffic impacts and potential congestion
 - noise and vibration impacts and how these would be monitored and minimised
 - questions around the length of construction, with a desire to make this as short as possible
- others raised questions about the potential environmental effects caused by the busway and its construction, including impacts to trees and native fauna including banded rails and pekapeka long-tailed bats.
- some people asked what feedback mana whenua had given on the proposed alignment, specifically the coastal marine area.

In response to this feedback, the Eastern Busway Alliance:

- is developing its construction methodology to reduce impact on the surrounding community as much as possible
- will comply with resource consent conditions to manage the effects of construction such as noise, vibration, dust and traffic flow
- is refining its development response framework which seeks to minimise and mitigate the project's effects
- will work with affected residents, businesses and stakeholders throughout the construction programme to ensure people are aware of upcoming works, and can plan accordingly
- has recently completed comprehensive Automated Bat Monitoring (ABM) to detect the presence of pekapeka in the area. The sound files have been analysed by ecologists and no pekapeka calls were detected
- has appointed specialist ecologists to ensure the busway has a minimal impact on native flora and fauna.

Communication and engagement:

- some people provided feedback on the communications and consultation process, including asking why the community was not consulted on potential design options
- a few people commented that they had not received the invitation to the April and May community engagement events – but this view was not expressed during the June events
the Howick Residents and Ratepayers Association requested to meet with the AT Board and brief the Board on the community's concerns.

In response to this feedback, the Eastern Busway Alliance:

- will continue to refine its communications and engagement approach in an effort to reach everyone that is affected or interested in the busway development
- will present this report to the AT Board to inform their decision on the section of the busway between Ti Rakau Drive Bridge and Botany Town Centre
- will work with the AT Board to explore the potential for the Howick Residents and Ratepayers Association and the Burswood Resident Collective to attend the upcoming board meeting.

Pakuranga Town Centre to Ti Rakau Drive Bridge:

While the primary focus of these engagement sessions has been on the section of the busway from Ti Rakau Drive Bridge to Botany Town Centre, more recently, especially during the June sessions, community members have also asked about the section between Pakuranga Town Centre and Ti Rakau Drive Bridge:

- some residents asked for clarity around right turn access onto Ti Rakau Drive out of streets such as Wheatley Avenue
- people wanted to know about the construction process and what impact that would have on traffic along Ti Rakau Drive, property access, and noise
- there were a number of detailed discussions with the project's construction team about how the construction is being planned, the sequencing of works, any night works, how the Pakuranga Highway and other streets might be affected, when the Reeves Road Flyover might be open and operational, etc

The Eastern Busway Alliance:

- will host a number of community engagement sessions in July, in the Pakuranga area, focusing on the Pakuranga Town Centre to Ti Rakau Drive Bridge section of the busway. These will provide detailed information about the design of this section of the busway, intersection layouts, station facilities, the Reeves Road Flyover, and the construction process. Invitations to these events will be widely circulated to the community when the details are confirmed.

4 Next steps

This report will be shared with the AT Board ahead of their meeting on the preferred design alignment between Ti Rakau Drive Bridge and Botany Town Centre.

When a decision has been made on the preferred alignment, the alliance will communicate directly with affected property owners, neighbouring stakeholders and the wider community.

During July the Eastern Busway Alliance will host a number of community engagement sessions focused on the Pakuranga Town Centre to Ti Rakau Drive Bridge section of the busway. Invitations to these events will be widely circulated once the details are confirmed.

Ongoing engagement with mana whenua, elected representatives, the Howick Local Board, property owners, key stakeholder groups and the community will continue throughout the project, as a primary and important aspect of the Eastern Busway's social license to operate.

5 Appendix

Bi-lingual invitation advertising the June 2022 information days.

