

# **New Public Transport Network for the Central Suburbs**

## **Feedback on behalf of the Meadowbank and St Johns' Residents Association**

### **Summary**

We are very concerned about the following four<sup>1</sup> aspects the proposed new network, which as proposed appear to represent a significant downgrade to the existing public transport service in Meadowbank and St Johns.

#### **1. The proposals remove bus services from more than 1,000 households**

If the proposed changes are implemented, well over 1,000 houses and apartments currently within 500 metres of a bus service will become more than 500 m away from a bus service.

This figure includes more than 600 houses that will become more than 800 m away from a bus service. More than half of those affected are currently within 200 m of a bus service.

We note that these numbers will increase as a result of consented Special Housing Areas and Retirement Village developments in the affected areas.

In addition, the proposals will remove from a very large number of houses a direct bus service to Newmarket, which is the primary destination for bus services from Meadowbank and St Johns.

#### **2. Bus service connection to Meadowbank Train Station is a must**

The above issue is compounded by the failure of the proposed new network to make any provision for bus service connection to Meadowbank Train Station; instead the proposals remove the present de facto connection offered by the 655 at Bonnie Brae / Meadowbank Road at a distance of 350 m.

The lack of bus service to Meadowbank Train Station appears to be a unique situation across the isthmus and is counter to the stated goal of using transfers to “gain both frequency and simplicity and provide access to a far greater choice of destinations.”<sup>2</sup>

Rather than removing the nearby bus service, we would like to see substantially improved connections between bus and train services, directly at Meadowbank Train Station. We note that the immediate area is under increasing pressure from “hide and ride”<sup>3</sup> car parking.

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<sup>1</sup> We are also concerned about the indicated service frequency of the proposed 70 along the Remuera / St Johns Road corridor, as it appears to be less than that provided by the present 625/635/645/655 plus school buses, which provide over 20 buses an hour in the morning peak; however we assume that the figures are only indicative, and that future service frequencies will at least match existing.

<sup>2</sup> <https://at.govt.nz/projects-roadworks/new-public-transport-network/new-network-for-the-central-suburbs/>

<sup>3</sup> This refers to the (legitimate but informal) use of residential side streets as a free “park and ride” facility.

### **3. Cross town service needs to be retained along the Remuera / St Johns Road corridor**

Additionally, we are concerned about the re-routing of the existing cross town 007 service from the Remuera Road / St Johns Road corridor to the Kepa Road / Kohimarama Road corridor, as the cross town 6.

The former corridor is much more densely populated, is slated for substantial development including SHAs and Retirement Village units and businesses and has T3 lanes along much of its length; whereas the latter is much less densely populated (and is bounded on one side alongside much of its length by the Pourewa Valley) and has no provision for bus priority.

We find this proposal especially odd given that the Kepa / Kohi corridor also has the cross town 5.

### **4. Improve connections to our major schools and the waterfront**

Finally, we feel that the opportunity has been missed to develop improved bus services to the two largest schools served by Meadowbank and St Johns, Selwyn College and St Thomas's school, and also to the waterfront at Mission Bay.

The relative inaccessibility of these popular destinations for residents in Meadowbank and St Johns means that they are generally accessed by car, adding to congestion along Kohi / Kepa Roads and in and around Mission Bay.

## Discussion

This subject has generated more commentary to MSJRA committee members than most; there appears to be almost complete agreement in the community about the issues raised. We note that the AT web page feedback map includes more comments from Meadowbank and St Johns than any other suburbs; these comments are in line with our submission.<sup>4</sup>

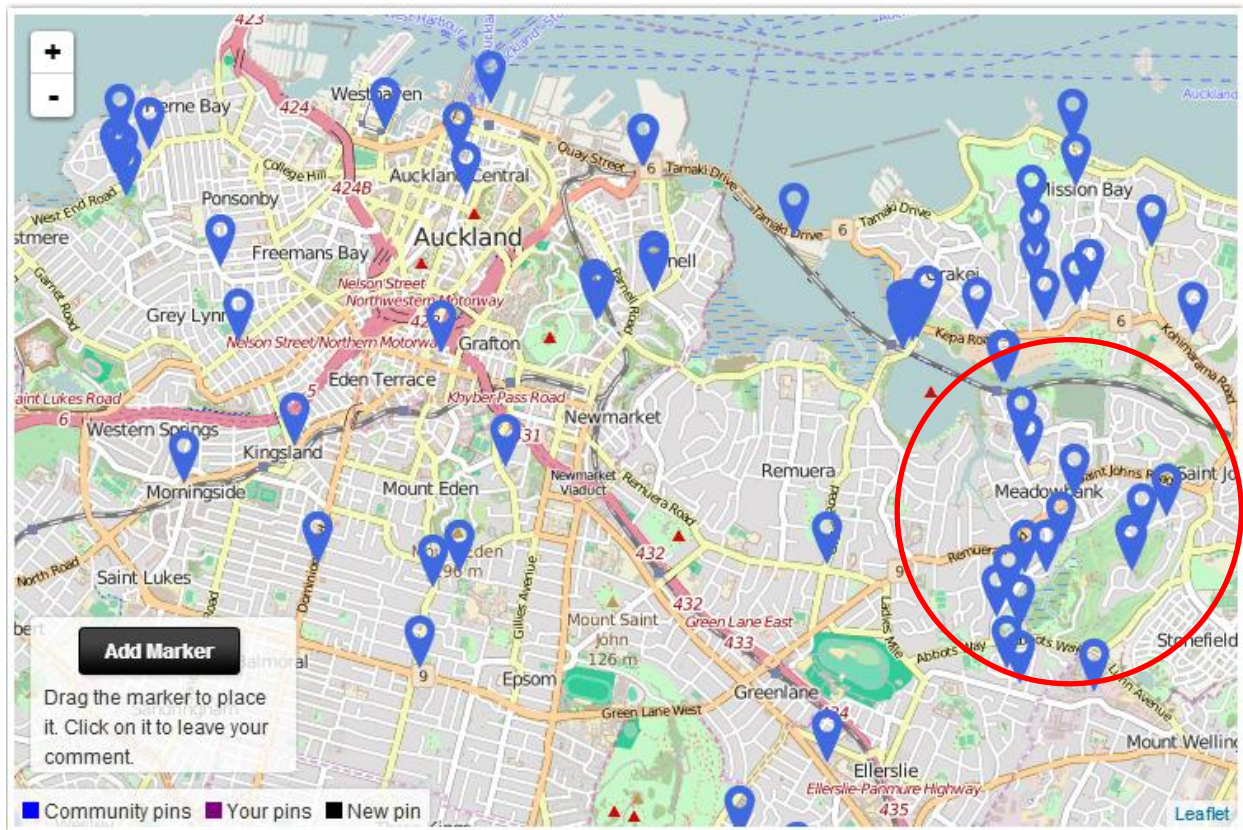


Fig 1. AT Feedback map showing disproportionate number of responses from Meadowbank and St Johns

### Detailed consideration of issues

#### 1. The proposals remove bus services from more than 1,000 households

More than 700 residential units on the following streets in Meadowbank North have their existing bus service (the 655) removed to a distance service more than 800 m:

- Macpherson Street
- Bonnie Brae Road

<sup>4</sup> <http://haveyoursay.at.govt.nz/New-Network-central-suburbs/maps/map-your-comments-central-suburbs> 21/11/2015

- Meadowbank Road (from number 109+)\*
- Harapaki Road
- Tahapa Crescent
- Mara Street
- Mamaku Street
- Kapua Street
- Manapau Street
- Purewa Road
- Puroto Street

About 250 of these houses are also more than 500 m away from Meadowbank Train Station, in effect isolating many residents from public transport service even though they are located 5 km from the CBD.

\*This includes all residents of the Meadowbank Village<sup>5</sup> retirement complex, who currently enjoy access to the 655 bus service via a short, flat walk (less than 100 m) along Meadowbank Road.

Additionally, houses on the following Streets have their bus services removed to a distance of more than 500 m:

- Fancourt Street
- Temple Street (northern end)

Many other houses in the Meadowbank North area have their bus service reduced to the indirect, irregular, proposed service 761, and are otherwise removed from a bus service to a distance of more than 500 m, including:

- Cruickshank Crescent
- Tipene Place
- Houghton Street
- Ripon Crescent
- Hawkins Street
- Gowing Drive (roughly between Worcester Road and Cruickshank Crescent)

Many of these houses are more than 2 km from the Train Station, which does not represent a realistic alternative to a local bus service, especially for the elderly, wheelchair users, families with small children people carrying heavy bags or for anyone during inclement weather.

About 120 houses on the following streets currently on or within 200 m of a bus service (the 635) lose their bus service to a distance of more than 500 m:

- Monteith Crescent
- Towle Place

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<sup>5</sup> Meadowbank Village is currently being redeveloped and extended, with consent for 256 units.

- Grand Drive (roughly adjacent to Monteith Crescent)

Approx 250 houses on the following streets currently on or within 500 m of a bus service (the 635) are removed to a distance of more than 500 m from a Newmarket bus route; about half of these stay within 500 m of the proposed the 725 Connector Service to Glen Innes, which may well not be convenient.

- Panapa Drive
- Norman Lesser Drive (south of Panapa Drive)
- Coldham Crescent
- Hoani Glade
- Charles Fox Place

In addition, by discontinuing bus services on Felton Mathew Avenue, residents here are disadvantaged given that this part of St Johns is very hilly.

In total, a substantial proportion of Meadowbank and St Johns residents are adversely affected by the proposed new network.

## **2. Connection to Meadowbank Train Station is a must**

Meadowbank Train Station is an attractive boarding point for commuters, being only 10 minutes (and two fare stages) from Britomart. Boardings at Meadowbank Train Station are growing at close to 20% per year, more than twice the rate of Orakei Train Station<sup>6</sup>, so that Meadowbank is likely to be the busier station by next year. This trend is likely to increase further with the improved walk up / ride up catchment when the Eastern Path opens. Given that under the new network, Orakei Train Station is proposed to be served by the 711/712 local bus (even though it is already served by the cross town 5 and 6) we believe there is a compelling case for a service connection to Meadowbank Train Station.

Meanwhile, the residential streets around Meadowbank Train Station are becoming increasingly full of parked cars during the working day, as far away as Harapaki Road. This creates issues of safety<sup>7</sup> and convenience<sup>8</sup>, some of which have been raised at the MSJRA. A bus service that connected with Meadowbank Train Station could alleviate this pressure, if the timing and frequency were sufficiently attractive.

In addition, Meadowbank Village is located 300 m uphill from the station, making it prohibitive for many elderly and infirm residents to walk to the train. These residents would benefit greatly from a bus service that provides connection down to Meadowbank Train Station.

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<sup>6</sup> Quoted at <http://transportblog.co.nz/2015/08/05/2015-station-boarding-results/>

<sup>7</sup> For example, these include difficulties for schoolchildren crossing the road due to parking on street corners on Manapau Street / Tahapa Crescent, an issues which has recently been addressed in part by AT with a proposal for new / extended broken yellow lines, which MSJRA supports.

<sup>8</sup> We have received comments from businesses on Meadowbank Road about all day parking blocking the angled car parks directly in front of their premises, which may be required by customers.

We note that the width of the road at the Meadowbank Train Station turning circle is over 23 m, which could easily provide for a bus turnaround, as shown in Fig 2.



*Fig 2. Meadowbank Train Station turning circle is over 23 m wide at its apex<sup>9</sup>.*

The St Johns Park and Gowing Drive neighbourhoods would benefit from such a service, as indicated in the following maps. We note that both of these areas are closer to Meadowbank Train Station than Glen Innes Train Station. These areas are served by the current 635 and 655 buses.

Fig 3 shows how the St Johns Park neighbourhood could be connected to Meadowbank Train Station via Meadowbank Town Centre, using part of the current 635 and 655 routes, both of which are highly valued by residents who depend on them. Consideration would need to be given to the safety and convenience of connections across St Johns Road for passengers wanting to access bus services to/from Newmarket and cross town along the Remuera / St Johns Road corridor.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> <https://goo.gl/maps/RqZRWVvif2m>

<sup>10</sup> AT's Remuera and St Johns Road CMP proposes improved Town Centre bus stops and pedestrian amenity.

Fig 4 shows the existing 655 service route through the Gowing Drive neighbourhood, extended from Bonnie Brae to Meadowbank Train Station. Combining these two routes would add a “dog leg” of 350 m each way to/from the train station.<sup>11</sup>

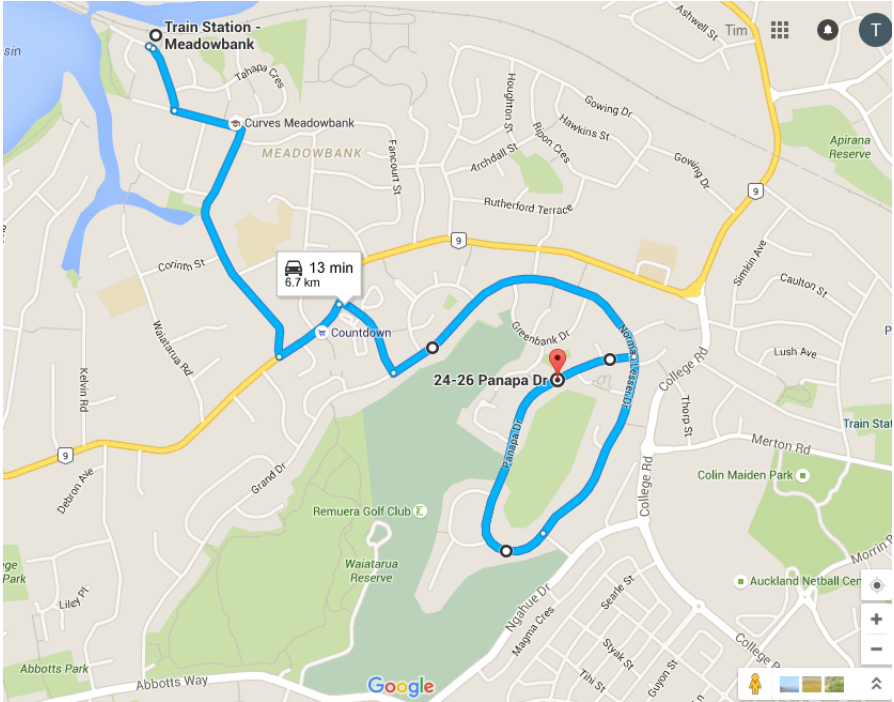


Fig 3. St Johns Park to Meadowbank Train Station via Meadowbank Town Centre<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Partially offsetting this, it would not be necessary to divert the service via Bonnie Brae, like the 655.

<sup>12</sup> <https://goo.gl/maps/goyoidmyAwF2>

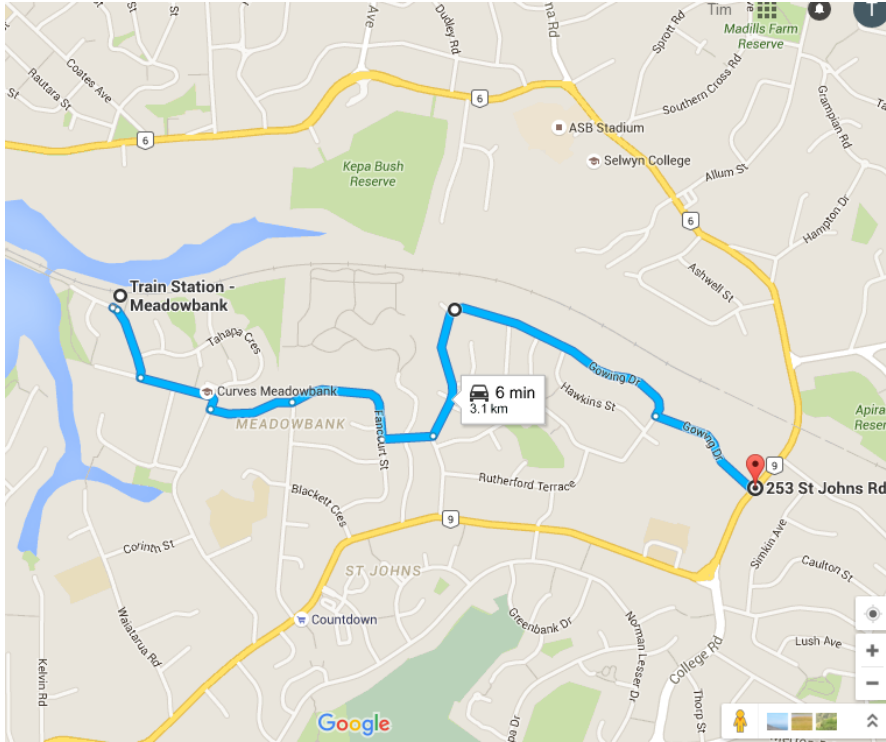


Fig 4. Gowing Drive to Meadowbank Train Station<sup>13</sup>

### 3. Cross town service needs to be retained along the Remuera / St Johns Road corridor

We have heard a range of negative feedback about the removal of the 007 cross town service, which provides a direct link for residents to a variety of destinations including: Greenlane Hospital, UNITEC, St Lukes, Cornwall Park, Alexandra Park and Pt Chevalier.

A point of particular concern for elderly residents is that the connection between the proposed 70 service and the proposed cross town 6 at the Remuera Road / Orakei-Ascot Road intersection. This would involve crossing very busy four- and five-lane roads and would likely include a length walk in either or both directions, which is less than satisfactory.

As noted above, it is not clear why both the proposed cross town 5 and 6 are routed along the Kapa Road / Kohimarama Road corridor, which is far less densely populated than the Remuera Road / St Johns Road corridor, and is well known to become severely congested at its western end. This would be deleterious to service punctuality due to the lack of provision of any bus priority lanes.

We believe the straightforward solution is to re-route the cross town 6 along Remuera / St Johns Road.

<sup>13</sup> <https://goo.gl/maps/8P72MyaPxzM2>

#### 4. Improve connections to our major schools and the waterfront

The two largest schools serving the Meadowbank and St Johns suburbs are Selwyn College and St Thomas's school, both located on Kohimarama Road.

The roads around both schools, especially at the intersection with Alum Street and John Rymer Place, are often congested in peak hours during term time, and again in the evenings and on Saturday mornings when there are events on at the ASB Stadium and school or community activities.

As residents are well aware, other than one school bus in the morning and one in the afternoon, there is no bus service between St Johns Road and Kohimarama Road. which has the effect that any students involved in before school or after school activities are inevitably taken by car.<sup>14</sup>

There is also no public transport service from Meadowbank or St Johns to the Eastridge shopping centre and medical facilities, or indeed to the waterfront at Mission Bay – the only bus access to Tamaki Drive being the current 007 to St Heliers via Glen Innes.

At first glance, the new 761 service promises improved connections to Selwyn College and St Thomas's School, which we would very much welcome; however, as proposed, the 761 misses the opportunity to address these issues effectively because it runs only at very limited times and in one direction.<sup>15</sup> For the same reason, it fails to offer a useful service further along Kepa Road to Eastridge.

Nor will the proposed route for the 761 to Britomart via Kepa Road / Ngapipi Road / Tamaki Drive appeal to local residents to the CBD, as they will very likely prefer to continue to use the 10 minute uncongested journey time offered by the train from Meadowbank Train Station. Finally, the 761 as proposed does not deliver any improved connection to the waterfront.

We think the 761 as proposed is a missed opportunity, but that it could be dramatically improved, for example by running from St Johns Park via Meadowbank Town Centre, the train station and Gowing Drive to Kohimarama and Kepa Road to Eastridge and down to Mission Bay.<sup>16</sup>

If the service commenced from the bus depot in Panmure, it might usefully run up College Road through St Johns Park to include either Panapa Drive or Norman Lesser Drive.

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<sup>14</sup> There is essentially no safe cycling infrastructure in the area, either on road or segregated. The Eastern Path promises to alleviate this situation to an extent, depending whether appropriate local connections are able to be built, and whether these then connect to relatively safe local streets.

<sup>15</sup> The proposed 761 service route is also undermined by the fact that the Kohi / Kepa Road corridor has no bus priority lanes.

<sup>16</sup> There are a number of options for the route: potentially it might run down Kupe Street to Mission Bay, along Tamaki Drive and back up Kohimarama Road, which could also enable the proposed cross town 5 to be simplified.

## Appendices

### A. AT Travel Planner

The train is not currently a useful option for residents wanting to travel from Meadowbank or St Johns to Newmarket.

This is readily shown using the AT web page to find options for travel from 110 Gowing Drive, Meadowbank to 277 Broadway, Newmarket.<sup>17</sup> The bus service is direct and door-to-door; by contrast taking two trains via Britomart extends the journey time to 50 minutes, allowing 20 minutes for the 2 km walk.<sup>18</sup>

The screenshot shows the AT Travel Planner interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Bus Train Ferry', 'Cycling & Walking', 'Driving & Parking', 'Projects & Roadworks', and 'About us'. A search bar is visible with the text '110 Gowing Drive, Meadowbank to 277 Broadway, Newmarket'. Below the search bar, a table lists the following bus options:

Departs at	Duration	Bus Number	Fare
07:21	29min	655	\$4.50
07:11	35min	625	\$4.50
07:05	23min	655	\$4.50
07:02	34min	625	\$4.50
06:54	40min	635	\$4.50
06:53	33min	625	\$4.50
06:45	32min		

The map on the right shows the route from Meadowbank (marked 'B') to Newmarket (marked 'A') via Broadway. The map includes labels for various roads such as Quay Street, Tamaki Drive, Kapa Road, and Broadway.

Fig 5. Travel to Newmarket from Meadowbank is by bus not train.

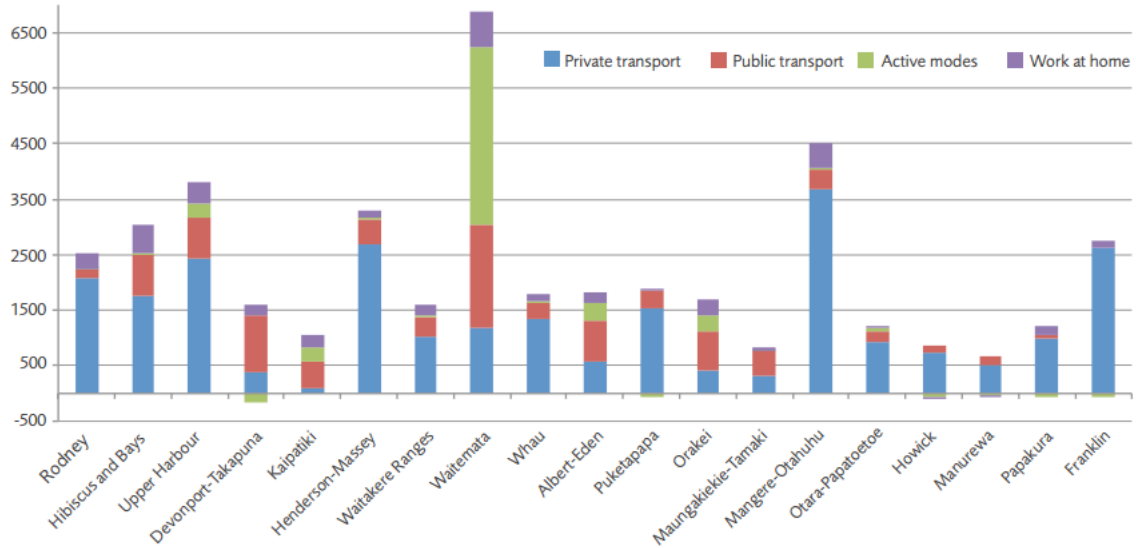
<sup>17</sup> <https://at.govt.nz/bus-train-ferry/journey-planner/>

<sup>18</sup> With the CRL this becomes one train via Aotea, K Rd and Grafton.

## B. Census Data

Looking at growth in commuting modes between 2006 and 2013 census, the growth in Orakei Local Board is predominantly public transport. Current trends in both bus and train patronage suggest this trend is continuing or becoming more pronounced.

**Figure 13: Modal shares for commuting by Local Board residents 2013**



*Growth in commuting by travel mode.<sup>19</sup>*

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.transport.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Research/Documents/Richard-Paling-report-Transport-Patterns-in-the-Auckland-Region-Executive-Summary.pdf>

### C. Reference Maps



Existing bus service patterns in the central eastern suburbs



Proposed bus service patterns in the central eastern suburbs